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POLITICAL SKETCHES

IN

1805.

Esse aliquam in terris gentem, quæ sua impensa, suo labore ac periculis,
bella gerat pro libertate aliorum: nec non finitimus aut propinquæ
vicinitatis hominibus, aut terris continentis junctis præstet: maria tra-
jiciat, ne quod toto orbe terrarum injustum imperium sit, et ubique
jus, fas, lex potentissima sint. *Liv. l. 33, p. 33.*

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POLITICAL SKETCHES

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Nº I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting to the public the following series of *Historical and Critical Sketches of Events*, the Editors feel it incumbent upon them to explain their motives, lest it should be inferred that they obtrude themselves unnecessarily upon a ground which may seem to be already occupied by others. Indeed, throughout the whole range of political literature, there is not *one* publication which embraces the views, plan, and principles of that which is now offered to the world. The slightest survey of the present state of the British press will establish the justice of their claims.

Towards the end of the year 1797, there appeared in this capital a weekly paper, entitled “The Anti-Jacobin,” which was undertaken for the avowed purpose of confronting the machinations, and of detecting the numberless falsehoods

with which the country was incessantly besieged by malignant, restless, and seditious spirits. It was continued for eight months with unrivalled success, and the benefit that the public derived from its circulation has made it a subject of general regret, that the patriotic gentlemen who displayed such uncommon abilities in its columns, should so soon have suspended their labours. If that paper were still in existence, or if any other similar to it were about to be produced, the utility of the present publication would be wholly superseded.

The times also are different from those wherein *they* wrote. In 1797 and 1798, the genius of Jacobinism, though frustrated in its mischievous designs, continued to lurk about the country, and, in the guise of an affected moderation, kept alive the suspicions of reflecting minds, in proportion to the secrecy with which all its operations were conducted. At present we have the good fortune to live in less tempestuous moments; but, if Jacobinism be extinct, or relegated to the Middlesex committees exclusively, there remains behind a leaven of faction, which, in the present conjuncture of our affairs, every honest man should strive to eradicate from the breasts of his countrymen. It may be true, that they who enlist themselves under the standard of Opposition, betray no principles in common with those which formerly distracted the attention of Government, and disturbed the peace of the community; but

can they justify the propriety of *any* systematic opposition to the measures of the King's Ministers, at a period when the fortitude, unanimity, and patriotism of the *whole* people are become the sole pledges of national safety? If they cannot rescue themselves from this imputation; if they can alledge no grounds for their hostility; then it must be acknowledged that they are to all intents and purposes a factious conspiracy, and that they are alike unworthy of the support and confidence of the nation. Although the fabric of civil society may not be shaken immediately by *their* schemes, yet it is not difficult to prove, that innumerable evils must befall that country which is at one and the same time the theatre of domestic strife and the object of foreign war. Thus, while our independence as a nation has hitherto escaped from being engulfed into that frightful abyss which has received the wretched fragments of many European states, we have just cause to dread the consequences of those internal feuds which the existence of parties, embittered by disappointment and envy, is ever calculated to create during periods of great national difficulty. To avert these effects, is one of the principal objects of the present work; in the course of which it will fall to our lot to examine the principles, professions, and views of the present extraordinary coalition of certain public characters, who, throughout their whole lives, and upon subjects so comprehensive,

as to include almost every thing that belongs to the science of politics, never agreed upon a single political point, until Mr. Pitt's return to the counsels of his Sovereign.

Having shewn how far we shall endeavour to supply the loss of the Anti-Jacobin paper, and in what particulars the situation of the country authorizes us to vary, in some degree, from the *peculiar* end it had in view; we shall, in the next place, take a cursory retrospect of the other publications which had any analogy to our own.

About a month after the publication of the Anti-Jacobin had been relinquished, there appeared a periodical work from the vigorous pen of M. Mallet du Pan, under the name of "Mercure Britannique, ou Notices historiques et critiques sur les Affaires du Tems." This admirable production was continued twice in every month, until the 10th of August 1799, shortly after which its energetic author was removed from this world. Never has the cause of social order been maintained with more glowing eloquence, nor the misguided policy of the continental cabinets exposed with more sincere constancy, than by that able and experienced politician: we shall keep his example continually before our eyes, and exert ourselves to combine the utility of the Anti-Jacobin paper with the great objects which he steadily pursued.

The other periodical performance, on the merits of which we shall offer a few observations, com-

menced with an equal degree of ardour and devotion to the common cause, was long supported with great ability and indefatigable industry, but has since deserted the principles by which it had met with public approbation. It was entitled the "Weekly Political Register," by William Cobbett, who had distinguished himself in America, as a strenuous assertor of the British interests, and as a determined adversary of all political innovations, and visionary political projectors. In January 1802, he commenced his weekly publication, and from his previous character as a firm adherent to the monarchy, and all the salutary institutions of our country, both in church and state, he received all the encouragement, patronage, and support which the most sanguine advocate of so good a cause had a right to expect; and which his avowed principles justly entitled him to experience. Where is the patriot who did not take a lively interest in the success of a writer, who in the first number of his publication declared, 'that his end was to "contribute to the preserving of those ancient and holy institutions, those unsophisticated morals and natural manners, that well-tempered love of regulated liberty, and that just sense of public honour, on the preservation of which our national happiness and independence so essentially depend *?"'

* Vide the first number of Cobbett's Weekly Political Register.

It is much to be regretted, that a man who possessed the means of making himself serviceable to this country, has forfeited every claim to its further countenance by the most unblushing dereliction of all those good principles which once constituted the boast of his life, and attracted the respect of his readers. The Weekly Political Register, once so loyal, spirited, and true, *no longer exists*; on the 1st of September 1804, it died a violent death. Those “ancient and holy institutions, those unsophisticated morals and natural manners, that well-tempered love of regulated liberty, and that just sense of public honour, on the preservation of which our national happiness and independence so essentially depend,” were all proscribed from the moment that the Political Register became the advocate and panegyrist of Sir Francis Burdett, and *fraternized* with committees composed of desperate incendiaries.

It is painful to notice such flagrant apostacy from good principles; and the time too which has been selected for the commission of these political heresies happens to be that wherein the opinions of most persons, whose ardent enthusiasm in favour of democratic theories had plunged them into manifold errors, were undergoing a visible change; when ashamed of, or disgusted with, the follies and crimes to which they had given a sanction, they were retracing their steps, and, with fervent wishes and contrite hearts, were rapidly returning to a “well-

tempered love of regulated liberty," and seeking shelter within the pale of our ancient and venerable constitution, as the only refuge and hope of every friend to freedom!

From this statement it is obvious, that the Weekly Register is defunct; that the paper which is now circulated under that title is the work of a *new* man with an *old* name; that it is become the organ of party misrepresentations, the mouth-piece of calumniators, and the base, slavish tool of a captious and disappointed faction. No hopes whatever can now be entertained of its return to former principles; for though we may be allowed to overlook the levities of inexperienced youth, and to hope for days of amendment, yet nothing magnanimous or repentant can be expected from unprincipled age, grown grey in folly, hardened against remorse, and insolently defying the reproaches of the wise and the good. Infamy itself cannot descend below this point of moral degradation.

Upon these considerations, the world must perceive that there is a VACANCY in our political literature, which invites the industry, the courage, and the enterprise of loyal subjects, who possess the leisure and capacity to supply, in some degree, the want of the two former productions, and to fill up the chasm occasioned by the secession of this tergiversating public defaulter.

Of the daily papers, it must be perceived in a

moment, that they cannot be considered as proper vehicles for the communication of such long political essays as the present undertaking pledges itself to insert; because, in the first place, they must accommodate themselves to all palates; and the class of readers for whose use or entertainment they are composed, consists of a great proportion of those to whom political discussions in general are ranked among the gravest order of literature; and, in the next place, the advertisements, and the necessity of detailing every occurrence, however trivial, materially restrict them within very confined limits. Otherwise they would be the most convenient methods of submitting opinions to the world. Such papers as the *Morning Post*, the *Courier*, *Sun*, and *English Chronicle*, which have a great circulation, and are conducted with ability as well as with a strict attention to the true interests of our country, would afford the best means of communication, if it were possible to suppose, that what should be inserted in any of them in the support of those interests would be read by all the subscribers to the other papers. This inconvenience was soon felt by Cobbett, who relinquished at an early period his plan of a weekly newspaper, and has since made his publication, a register of political essays merely, or a convenient receptacle for abuse, misrepresentations, and scurrility.

Audi alteram partem is a maxim of civil wis-

dom, and all that we ask as an antidote to the principles which this man disseminates. To listen to the arguments of both parties, is an act of common justice, which every one owes to his country and to himself; and as, from the general complexion of the principles espoused by the author and his coadjutors, we may safely predict that we shall be in perpetual hostility, it cannot be deemed an obtrusion on the public, that we should hold out to virtuous and public-spirited men a REPERTORY, in which sound principles may be found, and to which the loyal may contribute their own talents, or recur whenever they please for the opinions of others, who are animated by the same views.

Having thus, we hope, sufficiently established the *utility* of our undertaking, it only remains for us to submit the details of our plan to the world.

In the first place, it will be a portion of our duty to keep within proper bounds party writers of every description, whether they sculk along the columns of a newspaper, or exhibit themselves in the shape of pamphleteers. Hence, we shall rigidly scrutinize, sift to the bottom, and expose, the principles, the ignorance, the misrepresentations, and the lies of those whose object is to perpetuate divisions in the country: as in these departments the Weekly Political Register sins *by instinct*, we shall always reserve a separate article for its chastisement. Considered in this light only, our work

will have all the good effects of a review of political literature, by which the public will be presented with a faithful analysis of every thing that is worth reading, and saved the trouble and expense of perusing the trash that may be published.

Secondly, An historical and critical sketch of the events of each interval will be given with fidelity and impartiality; and, as often as it may be prudent, *authentic* information of what is in contemplation to be done.

Thirdly, Occasional sketches of our domestic policy, the state of parties, and the conduct of the European powers, will be introduced in their proper places.

Fourthly, An historical sketch of the adventures of the Corsican; and, as soon as we shall have completed our researches, we shall give with each number a sketch of his works. And,

Lastly, we shall thankfully receive and publish any communications which have relation to our main objects, and which breathe the spirit of loyalty, independence, and union.

The present number is submitted to the world, not (as is generally the case with those who begin any new publication) to give a specimen of the *best* they *can* do, but as an outline of the plan, and to invite the co-operation of such gentlemen as enter into our views, and feel the same affectionate regard as ourselves for the honour, the welfare, and independence of the British empire.

Of the execution, the public alone will be the best judges. They will not be the less pleased, we hope, when they recognise in the successive numbers of this work, the pens of several of their well-known friends. If it should meet their patronage and encouragement, no exertions will be wanting to fulfil every engagement which the Editors have pledged themselves to perform in the course of the present Introduction: on the other hand, should their verdict be unfavourable, the Editors will console themselves with the reflection, that to have failed in an honest attempt to promote the interests of their country will not be **DISHONOURABLE.**

Those gentlemen who feel disposed to favour this work with their communications are requested to forward them to the Editors, at Mr. HATCHARD's, 190, *Piccadilly.*

DOMESTIC EVENTS.

THE return of Mr. Pitt to the arduous situation which he had filled with such distinguished abilities for seventeen years, revived the hopes of the people of this country, and excited an extraordinary sensation in every part of Europe. All those states which had fortunately eluded the gripe of Gallic ambition, but which were still kept in suspense respecting their final doom, began to respire, and to assume their wonted courage ; the rest, which mourned the loss of their independence and liberties, fixed their eyes upon the man, who had been the foremost champion of the civilized world, and whose intrepid counsels had averted from his own country the horrors of revolutionary convulsion.

Such an event formed a remarkable æra in the politics of Europe, and we cannot wonder that it should have been considered with great expectation. It is natural for mankind to be most impatient when their desires are most eager. Hence, it was rashly concluded, that from the hour of his resumption of office, the knell of Buonaparte would be rung in every quarter of the world. This, however, may be regarded rather as the expression of their wishes, than as the result of their sober conviction ; for every reasonable being must be

sensible, that a military chief at the head of half a million of disciplined savages, by whom he has been raised to supreme power, is not to be unhorsed at the mention of a name that is obnoxious to him. The power of the Cersican does not totter upon such slippery foundations. His armies must either be beaten in the field, or become mutinous from the want of employment, before any reasonable hope can be entertained that his fate is at hand. Whoever, therefore, expected Mr. Pitt to perform a miracle, must be, at this moment, the dupe of his own inconsiderate credulity. But, if these sanguine persons had contemplated the probability of what Mr. Pitt *might* accomplish from that which he had already done, although, from the present circumstances of Europe, contrasted with those which existed at the commencement of the late war, they might have pushed their expectations too far, yet they would not have been remote from the truth. The same comprehensive genius which rendered this country impenetrable to the arms and intrigues of France, and which enabled the continental powers to repel for several years her principles of aggrandizement, might, without exaggeration, be deemed competent to collect together the perishing fragments of the European system, and to replace them once more upon the basis of permanent security. This positive good, however, does not depend on Mr. Pitt alone. It must be made manifest that there

is a disposition to be saved on the part of those whose interest it is to be saved. Unless this temper should appear in the most unequivocal shape, they will have no right to consider him in any other light than as the Minister of the British empire, bound to protect her rights, and to avenge her wrongs alone. No effort of human wisdom can induce the continental powers to shake off their lethargy, as long as the sense of present tranquillity prevails over their fears of future calamities. We must therefore distinguish between the impolicy of rushing headlong upon measures, with no auxiliary power to support them, and the propriety of conciliating the minds of the terrified, and of reconciling them in proper season, to a spirited, general, and effective assertion of their honour and independence. The state of Europe justifies this distinction ; and from the termination of all amicable relations between Russia and Sweden on the one part, and France on the other, we may conclude, that the auspicious moment is approaching, wherein a league to reduce the overgrown power of the latter, will become not only feasible, but politically advantageous to all Europe. The further discussion of this important measure belongs to another department of our work ; we shall therefore content ourselves with observing in this place, that the precise moment of Mr. Pitt's return to office, was, of all others, the most unpropitious and least promising for opening a nego^t

tiation in behalf of general independence, inasmuch as every power in Europe had an accredited minister at the court of Buonaparte, and thereby acknowledged ostensibly, its pacific disposition towards him. All the powers upon the continent must feel interested in the success of our arms, for this obvious reason, that our cause is their own ; and as soon as they are firmly convinced that this empire is invulnerable, they will be ready to second our efforts ; their movements, however, will be governed by expedience and opportunity. But, if it be admitted that the friends of social order abroad were too sanguine, it may be asked, whether the public expectations at home have not been disappointed in the measures of Mr. Pitt ? This is an important question ; and to do it justice, we must inquire into the circumstances of the country at the period of his return to power.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

After the peace of Amiens, a considerable portion of our veteran forces was disbanded ; from the opinion then entertained by his Majesty's Ministers, that the relative situation of France and England was such as to countenance the hope that it would for a long time be uninterrupted, and consequently, that a favourable occasion presented itself for economizing the public resources, by a reduction of the public force. Unhappily, the event has proved that they were wholly deceived

in their generous expectations. Hence, when the war burst upon us on a sudden, we were constrained to resort to such expedients as the public emergency required. Our enemy had four hundred thousand regular troops at his disposal; Great Britain not a sixth of that number. We were menaced with immediate invasion, at the idea of which, thousands and tens of thousands of our countrymen, indignant at the affront, volunteered their services to Government. National security and independence being uppermost in the minds of all, their offers were readily accepted; and though they did not enter into any stipulation by which they might be exempted from serving in the regulars, yet such was the temper of the times, that this exemption was granted to them by Parliament; and thus we obtained an irregular force of more than 500,000 men, highly useful at the time of their being embodied, full of spirit, courage, and patriotism, but confined to the *mere* purpose of defence, and under the name of volunteer soldiers considering themselves as *privileged* men, and entitled by law to plead their exemption from foreign service, even should the voice of their country, however imperious, claim their exertions beyond the limits of her watery frontier. By this policy, security was obtained at home, but no adequate provision was made for any great operations abroad. The minds of persons of every description were so deeply impressed

with the certainty of immediate invasion, that it is difficult even at this day of greater confidence to determine, whether it would have been more advantageous to the public interests, that the whole or only a part of the volunteer system should have been adopted. Those who *believed* the declarations of Buonaparte, and the boasts of Riouffe in the Tribune, were justified in catching at any measures which were calculated to bring the whole physical strength of the nation into the field, upon which were to be disputed the existence of Britons, and the renown and land of their forefathers. To them the idea of continental co-operation appeared in the light of a romantic vision ; and to make all safe at home, was esteemed a matter of more pressing necessity, than to administer succour abroad, if it had been required.

It is probable that the comprehensive nature of the volunteer institution may have deterred the ruler of France from attempting the execution of his promised threat ; but if it prevented the enemy from polluting our shores, it was also attended by two striking inconveniences ; for by such a vast absorption of the male inhabitants of the country, it diminished the means of recruiting the regular army, and thereby disabled our government from making demonstrations of a powerful disposable force, which, from our command of the sea, might either have infested the coasts of the enemy, or held him in perpetual alarm ; while its existence

would, perhaps, have revived the confidence and sinking spirit of the continent. The French know by experience, full as well as we do, that the power of this empire is never felt but at a distance from our sea-girt isle. Impressed with this conviction, and sensible that, from the extension of the volunteer system, the stock from which the regular levies were supplied underwent a proportionable diminution, and consequently perceiving the impossibility of any impression being made upon the power of France by a British army upon the continent, Buonaparte availed himself of our disquietudes and alarms, to consolidate his continental influence, and to pursue that career of fraud, treachery, and oppression, which has marked every footstep of his turbulent and ambitious life.

These appear to us to be inconveniences of a very serious nature; and though they cannot be contrasted with the evils which would have resulted from the appearance of an enemy in the bowels of our country, yet they *have* hitherto reduced us to the necessity of maintaining a *defensive* warfare, and impaired that opinion of our vigour, once the theme of European admiration.

Such then *was* the condition of our military establishment at the moment of Mr. Pitt's return to the Ministry. In order to ascertain whether the high expectations formed respecting his conduct have been disappointed, or, more strictly speaking, whether they ought to be disappointed,

it will be first necessary to discuss two material points.

First, Would Mr. Pitt have been warranted in making a sudden and complete change in the military system which he found established at his hands, even if, in his own opinion, it was not the best that might have been adopted?

Secondly, If not, what measures should he have pursued to make it better?

In answer to the first question, we must advert to the state of the country at the period under discussion. We have already anticipated many of the arguments which might have been introduced in this place, to shew the extreme difficulty that was experienced in adding to the number of the troops of the line, owing to the constitution and universality of the volunteer force. There remained therefore but four measures to be pursued, in order to create instantaneously a permanent disposable army; namely, to convert the volunteers into real effective soldiers; to reduce their numbers; to disband them altogether; or to retain them, and employ such progressive methods for recruiting the regulars, as the nature of the volunteer institution, and the circumstances of the country, allowed.

We shall now prove, that, without incurring the greatest dangers, it was impossible to make any material alteration in our establishment at the period alluded to, and consequently, that the last

measure was the only one to which the Minister could recur, consistently with sound policy and public safety. In this country, as well as in every part of Europe, the persuasion had become general, that the invasion would be attempted. A multitude of political circumstances justified that belief, and none more so than the extraordinary expense incurred in the construction of works along the whole line of the French coast from Dunkirk to Havre, the fortification of Boulogne harbour, the maritime preparations in Holland, the assemblage of a numerous flotilla in the road of Boulogne, and of a considerable number of troops at *every advantageous point of embarkation* *.

The season most favourable for launching their crazy armament into the sea was shortly after the vernal equinox ; so that Mr. Pitt came into power at the precise moment when the invasion might have been expected. Under such circumstances, would it have evinced the talents and prudence of that enlightened statesman, to have rent asunder and dispersed all those elements of national security which had been framed by the public-spirited

* We request that our readers will pay particular attention to the fact, that, for the first twelve months of the war, the flotilla now collected in Boulogne harbour was variously dispersed in the different ports of France, Holland, and the Low Countries ; because we shall hereafter deduce one of the following conclusions from it—either that Buonaparte still means to make a grand attempt from Boulogne, whatever may be the result ; or that, by collecting his whole armament in *one* harbour, he has betrayed the most consummate ignorance and impolicy.

zeal of his predecessor? The enemy were then supposed to be at our doors; day after day brought fresh proofs of their intention to realize their atrocious projects; how was Mr. Pitt to meet them, except with the public force, which Mr. Addington had bequeathed to him? Had he entertained the design of new-modelling the national system of defence, the emergency dictated that he should abandon it. There was no time to spare for the reorganization of our physical strength, much less even to digest its plan; and if he had pursued a different line of conduct, he would have betrayed the most culpable rashness, and he would have been justly reproached with hazarding the fate of the empire on the bare possibility that the enemy had either relinquished his scheme; or that, with infallible certainty, he could be prevented from accomplishing it, by the vigilance and superiority of our blockading squadrons. Whatever, therefore, the consequences might have been, he was bound to defend the country with the means it *then* possessed; and if he had failed, however deplorable the catastrophe, no imputation could justly have been raised against him, for employing those diversified forces which the exigency of the moment exacted, and the wisdom of Parliament had previously supplied.

Independently of these considerations, we should also reflect, that it was beyond Mr. Pitt's power, even as Prime Minister of the country, to alter

that constitution of things which the Legislature had enacted. The volunteer system was in every respect, even down to the minute particulars of dress, the work of Parliament ; not the slightest innovation, not the smallest reform in their original establishment, occurred without previous motions and bills ; so that if ever any species of public force could be deemed by way of eminence the creature of Parliament, the volunteer institution was that one.

To have subjected that force to undergo further modifications and experiments, would have required fresh motions and bills ; and thus, while our legislators would have been debating on their respective merits or demerits, a French army might have advanced within sight of the capital. In France, such an embodied force might have been transformed at the nod of Buonaparte into conscripts for the regular service ; but Britain is a land of law as well as of liberty, and the faith of Parliament superior to every consideration of temporary advantage.

These were the obstacles which opposed themselves to any immediate change of system, and which, from their nature, were not susceptible of a speedy removal. In such a dilemma, what measure presented itself as the most advisable and least hazardous ? The answer to this question brings us to our second proposition, namely, What

measures should have been pursued to make our situation better.

ADDITIONAL FORCE.

The first consideration which naturally presented itself was, to devise the means of augmenting our regular army with the least possible inconvenience or hardship to individuals, and without weakening those measures which had been adopted for the internal defence and security of the country. In conformity to these principles, an act of Parliament passed about the close of the last session, the object of which was, to remove those obstacles that impeded the levies for the regular army, and which originated in the competition that prevailed between the recruiting for the regulars and for limited service. To put an end to the excessive bounties which arose out of that competition, to reduce the numbers of the militia (as originally voted by Parliament), by transferring the quotas to be raised in the different counties to increase the regular army, and to lay a permanent foundation of a system for the progressive augmentation of our disposable force, were the principal provisions which Mr. Pitt's bill embraced.

Great advantages have already resulted from this measure; for it has removed that oppressive partiality by which the burden of providing a substitute, or of being compelled to personal service, fell with peculiar severity on the lower orders of

the community. Before the passing of Mr. Pitt's bill, the bounties had reached the inordinate amount of forty pounds for a substitute; and the poor man who had been balloted, was either reduced to beggary for the sake of providing one, or reluctantly compelled to leave his house and family, in order to serve in person: this grievance has been removed by the total abolition of the old balloting system, and the substitution of a much more liberal policy. The provisions of that bill were also attended with this additional advantage, that they did not destroy or endanger any of the other systems which had been adopted for the national defence, nor sacrifice the other means of general recruiting, either of those then in use, or which may hereafter be pursued. We have already explained several of the causes that obstructed the recruiting service for the regulars, and which, to a certain degree, will continue to operate as long as our other military arrangements shall be maintained. The light, therefore, in which the Additional Force Bill should be seen, is not as a system devised on the spur of the occasion, to create an additional army of troops of the line in twenty-four hours; but as a measure calculated to suppress a competition which defeated the recruiting service in general; and which, while it removed those heavy fines that bore peculiarly hard on particular districts, perplexed the magistracy, imposed a severe choice upon the people, and was attended

with extreme confusion, without the prospect of any permanent good ; laid the basis of a new military system, that, considered either as a measure of national security, or as an efficient depot for the increase and completion of our disposable force, was admirably adapted to qualify us to resume that station in Europe, of which we had proved ourselves worthy by our resources, valour, and fortitude.

It is not our wish to anticipate at present either the arguments or facts, which will be adduced in their proper place, respecting the efficacy of Mr. Pitt's bill ; but we venture to predict, that its beneficial effects will be so fully illustrated, and so generally acknowledged, that there will be no necessity for our resuming the subject henceforward. If, however, we should be disappointed in this expectation, we shall be ready to enter into further details, and to establish, beyond the power of contradiction, what we have here asserted.

IS ALL SAFE AT HOME ?

Every prudent man will naturally ask this question before he directs his thoughts to his relations abroad. To resolve it with correctness, we must make a proper estimate of our actual domestic condition and our foreign connexions : we shall confine our remarks, in this number of our work, to the former.

The public force of this empire, whatever may be the views which our Government entertain concerning the employment of its disposable part, consists in our navy, troops of the line, militia, and volunteers.

On the navy, for reasons which we shall assign, perhaps, in our next number, we refrain from making any other observation, than that the description of force which is most fitted to defeat the invasive projects of the enemy, has been augmented to such a degree as to render any attempt against these islands the most perilous adventure in the world. The regulars are in the best state of discipline, their numbers have been considerably increased, and, as we shall now demonstrate, a large portion of them can safely be spared to carry the glory of the British name to any quarter of the globe. When a country is thus capable of extending her arms to distant regions, it may be rightly inferred, that she is invulnerable at home.

The militia and volunteers, therefore, are the sole objects that deserve our attention. Are *they* equal to the awful task of defending the empire? We affirm that they are; and the conclusion we have drawn from the experience of other modern nations, under *precisely similar circumstances*, confirms this opinion.

It has unfortunately become fashionable among a certain class of politicians, to decry these defensive institutions; and the sentiments hazarded by

several members of Parliament, who possess no knowledge of military science, have been echoed back even by experienced soldiers, from whom a better judgment might have been expected. Among the most distinguished adversaries of the militia and volunteer establishments, we are reluctantly compelled to mention the name of Sir Robert Wilson, well known as the historian of the British expedition to Egypt, and acknowledged to be a brave, able, and intelligent officer.*.

Before we enter upon this subject, we feel it to be our duty to except against the analogy which Sir Robert has endeavoured to establish between the relative situation of Britain and Carthage. "As to the volunteers," says he †, "the battle of Zama, by which Carthage fell, should be a warning to England; she should remember that *Delenda est Carthago* is the cry of the French; and that her relative situation, as to the means of defence, are very similar—that the resemblance is painfully accurate."

Now, in the whole range of political reasoning, there are no circumstances more apt to mislead the judgment than historical allusions; and in this instance, it happens unfortunately for Sir

* This gentleman published lately a pamphlet, entitled, "An Inquiry into the present State of the military Force of the British Empire, &c.;" in which he has treated the volunteers with undeserved severity, as we shall presently prove.

† Page 25.

Robert's argument, that he has not cited a parallel case. There is not the least similitude between the state of this country and that of Carthage previous to the battle of Zama. Was Carthage an island? was it detached from the continent of Africa? were there not many points favourable for the disembarkation of the Roman army along a coast easy of access? had not the Carthaginian navy sustained repeated defeats before Scipio landed in Africa? was, therefore, the former able to hold every Roman port in a state of blockade; or, in plainer language, was that power mistress of the sea? What Pericles said of Athens would have applied strictly to Carthage: if it had been an island, it would have been invulnerable.

But the defeat at Zama was *not* the *cause* of the fall of Carthage; it was only the *effect* of many causes which had co-operated to precipitate the subversion of that power; the proximate cause of its downfall was, the struggle between its two powerful factions for the government of the state. In the course of the intestine divisions to which that contest gave rise, all provision for the public safety was neglected; no opposition whatever was made to the landing of the Roman legions; and therefore, in such a distracted empire, and amidst such discordant councils, the genius of fifty Hannibals would not have availed to have sustained the sinking fortunes of the commonwealth. To these considerations we may add, that the flower

of the Carthaginian youth had perished in the fatal expeditions to Sicily ; that the Roman fleet was equal, if not superior, to that of its enemy ; that the sea being open to them, they could supply or reinforce their army without interruption ; and lastly, that Carthage confided her defence, in a great measure, to the doubtful fidelity of *mercenaries*.

By what possible stretch of ingenuity, therefore, can any man living infer, that the circumstances of the two nations “are very similar and painfully accurate?” We profess ourselves to be wholly ignorant of any such analogy ; and consequently we are constrained to censure that terrible judgment which this gallant author has incautiously denounced against his country. In fact, the contrast is as applicable to Britain and Carthage as it is to France and China.

This argument should operate as a lesson to political reasoners, to be extremely cautious how they form analogies between the accounts of ancient and modern nations, lest from one or a few circumstances of apparent similarity in the history of mankind, they deduce conclusions fraught with error, and incapable of any useful application. In estimating the moral qualities of public men, in extracting maxims of civil prudence from their great virtues or vices, we may derive the best instruction from the records of antiquity. If we be desirous to form an estimate of the character of

Buonaparte, we should be justified in turning to the luminous pages of Tacitus, whose penetrating genius searched deep into the most recondite emotions of a tyrant's heart. Yet, even in this instance, we should be liable to err, if we did not previously consider, that the collected crimes of all the blood-stained imperial assassins recorded in the volumes of that sententious historian, vanish before the atrocities of the inhuman despot of Europe, who seems to have reduced into a system and *method*, to have assembled in one ferocious breast all the malignant propensities, and to practise all the horrors, which history or tradition from the beginning of time, have recorded; every monster in human shape; by whom the world has been oppressed and scourged. But this application will not hold good in respect to distinct communities, unless *all the circumstances relating to them are essentially alike*. Sir Robert Wilson's comparison, therefore, has no more connexion with the subject before us, than his mortars and howitzers have with the catapultas and balistas of the ancient world. We live in gunpowder times, and by gunpowder logic our country must stand or fall.

But to return to the militia and volunteers, or "armed populace," as Sir Robert has contemptuously termed them. In his zeal to diminish the utility of these bodies, he has been led (inadvertently, no doubt) into two most egregious errors:

first, he asserts of the French volunteers, at the commencement of the late war, that there were in France, at that period, "near 250,000 regular instructed troops, amongst whose ranks the volunteers and *conscripts* * were dispersed;" and secondly, that "with all the advantages which the French national armies retained, were they not beaten *every where* at the commencement of the war?"

It is really surprising, that the events of the late war should so soon have escaped Sir Robert's recollection. General Dumourier, who is now in London, and who was the French minister in 1792, can tell the gallant Knight a very different story. At the breaking out of the war, the republic had not *one half* the number of regular forces mentioned above; and so far were the volunteers from being dispersed in the ranks of the troops of the line, that there were complete battalions of the former, engaged in actual service, with no other experienced officers among them than adjutants and sergeants taken from the regulars. Many of the troops which under Miranda overran the Low Countries, were composed of volunteer battalions. There were not less than 4000 volunteers with Kellerman at the battle of Valmy, where the Duke of Brunswick at the

* There were then no conscripts; the conscript law had not then been invented.

head of the Prussian army received his first check; and above 50,000 of the same species of force were organizing at Chalons, under Marshal Luckner.

With respect to the second assertion, that these national guards “were beaten *every where* at the commencement of the war;” the fact was diametrically opposite, for they were beaten *nowhere*. Longwy and Verdun, which capitulated to the Prussian arms, were garrisoned wholly by *troops of the line*; and the cowards who fled at the approach of the Austrians and assassinated their General (Dillon), were composed *entirely of the regulars*. During the whole of the first campaign, from the battle of Valmy to the retreat before Maestricht, the French army carried every thing before them: the greater part of that army was formed from battalions of volunteers, accustomed only to a weekly drill before they took the field, yet they performed their movements with order and celerity even in the face of their enemies, and overpowered those veteran legions which had fought and conquered under Laudohn and Frederick the Great.

We might enumerate in this place, a number of instances wherein militia and volunteers have evinced the highest degree of courage, and obtained the greatest successes. But, without recapitulating all of them, we shall confine our ob-

servations to those facts which have occurred in our own times.

The military events of the American war we have all lived to witness ; but we must premise, that, while that country formed a portion of the British empire, her provincial militia, commanded by provincial officers, discomfited, on many occasions, the veteran troops of France. It is impossible to read the progress of Sir William Johnson, in 1759, and his body of provincial militia, without admiration of, and confidence in, such a species of force. During the war which America waged against the mother-country, her militia constituted her principal force, and achieved the most important advantages without the co-operation of her allies. It has been judged expedient lately to discredit these operations, to contest the claims of the American militia, and to ascribe their final success to rivers, woods, and bush-fighting. We are willing to concede every possible virtue to rivers, woods, and bush-fighting ; but we must at the same time be allowed to ask, whether there was any bush-fighting at the battle of Bunker's Hill? or, when the American militia crossed the Delaware in the midst of snow, storms, and ice, and carried Trenton, garrisoned by Hessian troops? or, in the subsequent capture of Princeton, which decided the fate of the campaign in their favour? Lastly, without going over the history of that war, we should wish to be informed, whether

there was any bush-fighting in the pitched battle of Saratoga, when a whole British army piled their arms, while an ill-trained, a worse-armed, and “undisciplined rabble,” to whom Eyes right and Eyes left were totally unknown, marched round them in triumph, to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*? Nor was the loss of the Americans in that battle so great as that of the English; a circumstance that affords a consolatory glimpse of hope that the prediction of the volunteers being *all killed* before they can rally, will not be quite fulfilled to the letter. It may also not be amiss to observe, that one steady fire from a battalion of this description of men, will do more execution than six discharges from a regular force; and for this reason, the consciousness of their inferiority in discipline will induce them to supply its place, as a measure of self-preservation, by executing *well* what they have to do *.

The next instance in favour of this species of force may be taken from the history and fate of Switzerland. With the single exception of three troops of dragoons in the canton of Berne, the whole strength of the Swiss depended on their infantry militia. The constitution of that body

* The Prefect Zschokke confirms this fact in his *History of the Invasion of Switzerland*; he says, “The French, on their parts, fired with great quickness, but with a bad aim; the Swiss, on the contrary, fired seldom, but levelled exactly, and never missed their mark.”

somewhat resembled the principle of our militia law, with this advantage, that every man was liable to *personal service* from eighteen to sixty years of age. In the Forest Cantons the men elected their own officers, with the exception of the field-officer, if the strength of the corps admitted of one. The governments of the cantons of Berne, Soleure, Fribourg, and Zurich, sent respectively once during the summer an inspecting field-officer to review the troops in their own districts, and to report their state. The person selected for this business was always an officer who had served at least five years in some foreign service. The troops were assembled every Sunday after church, and exercised for the space of two hours; absentees were fined a small sum. The artillery were occasionally exercised to fire with ball.

In the second week of February 1798, a mournful year for Switzerland, the Diet of the cantons had collected their militia, which, by a double contingent, formed an army of 26,000 men, filled with enthusiasm in their cause, confidence in their chiefs, love for their laws, hope in their arms and the protection of Providence. A religious elevation of mind was united to the emotions of patriotism and honour. What might not have been done with such men, animated with such noble sentiments? The five demons of the Directory had already 45,000 of their best troops under General Brune, in the heart of the country.

The Bernese army, under the brave and unfortunate General d'Erlach, amounted then to *twenty-five thousand* men, including 500 dragoons, and a corps of new-levied hussars. They had no engineers, or staff officers of any great experience. But although destitute of every thing necessary to carry on the operations of war, they were inspired with courage, and made up their minds to supply their *want of experience* by an impetuous and decisive attack.

The rest of the Helvetic contingents, led by true-hearted officers, arrived daily, but in a very incomplete state; Zurich having sent only 1500; Uri 600; Schwitz, Glaris, and Unterwalden, each 400; Appenzel, and the town of St. Gall, scarcely 350; Lucerne 1200, with orders to cover the frontiers of their own canton only: Fribourg and Soleure being menaced as well as Berne, retained their troops on their own territories; Zug did not send a man; the contingents of Basle and Schaffhausen consisted in insolent deputations, to solicit submission to the ordinances of the Directorial sultans. These different contingents, which did not amount altogether to 5500 men, had received orders to form the second line, and to remain on the defensive. It was now the 24th of February. General Schawenbourg, another of the French agas, with 22,000 janissaries from the army of the Rhine, had in this interval formed a junction with General Brune, making the whole

of the French force amounted to FORTY-SIX THOUSAND veteran troops, enured to conquest. The whole force of Switzerland opposed to them amounted only to 26,000 men, 20,000 of whom had been under arms only TWENTY DAYS, and covered an extent of country stretching thirty-five leagues. Before the expiration of the truce, Schawenbourg attacked the castle of Dornach. It held out, however, notwithstanding the disadvantages of a sudden assault, for twenty-four hours. In the night of the 1st of March 1800, the French, conducted by several Swiss traitors, surrounded the post of Lengnau, between Buren and Soleure, which was defended by 750 mountaineers of Oberland, under the brave Wourstembergeur. The little battalion, though surprised, defended themselves as became volunteers; 200 of them were either wounded or killed; but 800 of their enemies bit the dust. Three thousand French assassins, headed by Schawenbourg, presented themselves before Soleure; the timid magistracy opened its gates; and the French advanced. A battalion of 500 Bernese being in the city, the peasants and the loyal rallied round it, and flew to the gates, which they closed in despite of their enemies. Confounded at this unexpected resistance, the enemy commenced a bombardment. As the city had no ramparts, its defenders could no longer retard its fall. The Bernese troops, carrying away with them thirty pieces of cannon, and followed by

the peasants and young patricians, retreated in good order in the face of the enemy, and occupied a position at St. Gines, on the little river Sensen, three leagues from Berne, which they maintained against every attack. Incensed at the temporizing policy of the government, and poisoned by seduction, the right division of the Swiss army, composed chiefly of the militia of Argovia, disbanded. The division of the centre, which had withstood and repulsed the French army in several engagements, became mutinous. A tumultuous retreat took place; confidence being destroyed, insubordination at its height, and authority without respect, the troops chose their own ground: the left division, by the prudence of Colonel de Watteville, retreated without loss, and in order, on the posts of Guminen, Laupen, and Newenegg. As to the rest of the Helvetic contingents, they remained immovable in the second line, refusing every entreaty to advance, and considering themselves as spectators merely. At length, the senate of Berne, awakened from its supine infatuation by the perfidy of the French, and the sense of public danger, decreed the Landsthrum *. This resource, now that the foe was at their gates, served only to increase the general confusion. Every thing was fast going to ruin; but all was not yet lost. Even

* A prerogative resembling that of his Majesty for calling out all his subjects.

this returning spirit of vigour would have saved Swisserland, had not an accursed fatality induced them to suspend the public authority on the 4th of March, and to elect in its stead a provisional government; which immediately proposed to Brune to withdraw their troops, on condition of his remaining on his present position. This was precisely what he desired. The Swiss army, weakened by desertions, was reduced to 14,400 men, 800 of whom, at Newenegg and Guminen (the former three leagues to the north, and the latter the same distance to the west from Berne), kept 20,000 French in check. The remaining 6,100 occupied the position of Fraubrunnen, also three leagues north from the capital. Such was the *handful* of militia and volunteers which remained to dispute the fate and renown of Swisserland.

In order to cover the principal attack upon Fraubrunnen, the enemy, on the 5th, at one in the morning, opened an ineffectual cannonade on the post of Guminen, and marched 15,000 men on Laupen, Newenegg, and St. Gines. Notwithstanding this manœuvre, the Bernese defended themselves with intrepidity, repulsed the enemy at St. Gines, and yielded at Laupen and Newenegg, only to an immense superiority of force. The adjutant-general rallied the troops; and a reinforcement of 2000 men having arrived at break of day, the Bernese militia *renewed the battle, by attacking in their turn*, with astonishing impetu-

sity. Receiving a tremendous fire of grape and musketry, they advanced, bayonets fixed, upon the foe, routed, and compelled him to repass the ravine of Newenegg ; drove him before them nine miles ; recovered all the artillery they had lost on the preceding night ; and took several pieces of his cannon, besides killing and wounding 2000 of his men. In this hard-fought action, the total loss of the Bernese in killed and wounded of both sexes was *eight hundred*. The victorious column was preparing to march to the deliverance of Fribourg, when other events forced it to retreat.

About five o'clock in the morning Schawenbourg attacked in front and on the flanks the position of Fraubrunnen. The militia had to defend themselves not only against a force treble their number (*two thousand* of whom were cavalry), but also against a train of *flying artillery*, a refinement in the art of war wholly unknown to them, and which made dreadful havoc in their ranks. After a very stubborn resistance, the position was turned and carried by the enemy. The militia rallied at Urtéren, and renewed the battle. Dislodged from this position, they occupied another in the rear of the Grauholtz, a woody hill, about a league and a half from Berne ; and there the action continued for two hours and a half with inuderous fury. The French having succeeded in turning this position also, the Bernese rallied again about half a league from the former, bravely

disputing their country inch by inch. Driven from their ground, their ranks thinned by the fire of the artillery, and the sabre of the enemy's cavalry, they rallied once more, *on an open plain*, within sight of their capital, their altars, and all the monuments of their ancestors' glory, and, *for the fifth time in one day, renewed the battle*. How often have regulars rallied five times in one morning against treble their number? Their intrepid but unfortunate little army left 2000 killed or wounded of both sexes on the different fields of action. The loss of the French exceeded 1600 killed, besides an incredible number of wounded. Here expired that famous republic, which had been the nursery of illustrious statesmen and generals, and celebrated for its wisdom, its maxims, and its valour! By its fall, it pleased Divine Providence to convey an instructive lesson to all free states, that as, in time of peril, unanimity is the bond of security and independence; so dissension, intrigue, and faction will infallibly cause their loss. Had the people of Berne been united, not treble the force which the French had in their canton could have accomplished its subjugation; but when those entrusted with the interests of the people set them an example of division, we cannot wonder that the people themselves should quarrel with each other. The disorder which reigned among the Swiss troops was such; that they appeared beaten before they had fought. The chiefs had

no consistent instructions ; the soldiers were divided in sentiment ; they knew neither where nor why they were to fight *.

With respect to the struggles of the rest of the Helvetic confederacy, after the reduction of Berne, and particularly of the Forest cantons, glorious as they undoubtedly were, and affording additional testimony in favour of the volunteer system, yet their details would exceed our present limits. It will always be remembered with admiration, that in the bosom of the Helvetic Alps there existed a small republic, which, for the maintenance of its ancient liberty, ventured to wage an unequal contest against a formidable and more potent neighbour. Neither extent of territory, nor strength, nor influence in the great affairs of the world, were the allotment of this people : they have been rendered interesting by their misfortunes, and worthy by their virtues, their courage, and their energy, of the pencil of the historian and the survey of the philosopher. They feared more than death to be the vassals of France : born free, they resolved to die free. They thought it sweet to sprinkle with their blood their natal soil, and to find the bed of death on the fields rendered illustrious by their ancestors. No monument has been raised to perpetuate their valour and bear their name to posterity ; but as long as the sterile

* Zschokke's Hist. of the Invasion of Switzerland, chap. viii.

rocks of Schindellegi shall endure, as long as the plains of Morgarten shall be carpeted with verdure, the remembrance of their deeds shall not perish. They will be recorded in the annals of history after the heroic actions of the age of William Tell, and will add new lustre to the Swiss name. Europe, a witness of their valour, admired their efforts, and now laments their fate.

The losses sustained by the French in the different actions with the small cantons were very considerable. They may be estimated, says Zschokke, in the proportion of *ten to one*.

It is evident there was no bush-fighting in the actions which we have enumerated, as an inspection of the map of the country will shew. We insist, therefore, that those battles were fought in a comparatively open country, by militia battalions *in line*; who had been embodied only *twenty days before they went into actual service*; that the loss was equal on both sides, or that the difference was in favour of the Swiss; that militia and volunteers *can* rally without being all *killed off* in the evolution; that if the 26,000 confederates had been united, they would have driven the French, with their cavalry and flying artillery, within their own confines; and that if the Diet of Arau had proclaimed the Landskraum a month sooner, 400,000 Frenchmen would not have been able to have forced their way into Switzerland. Hence the loss of that country is to be

attributed, not to the organization of its militia, but to the unhappy indecision of its government.

Now if 14,000 Swiss volunteer infantry were thus able to face a regular, disciplined army of nearly 50,000 men, supported by a well-appointed cavalry and artillery, and even to keep the scales of victory long in suspense; shall it be denied that FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND British volunteers, whose motives to action are full as strong, are wholly incompetent to defend their country against an invader, who by no human possibility can bring one fourth of their force to act at one time against them? The rebel Arthur O'Connor, who lately published a philippic against us, under the title of "*Etat de la Grande Bretagne*," has fully demonstrated the impracticability of the invasion of this country; and we recommend to Sir Robert's attention the chapter wherein he recounts the difficulties, and expatiates upon the equipage, the various appointments, and immense expenses which must accompany the march of an invading army, even upon the continent. To such impediments let it be added, that we are separated from the aggression of our neighbours by the sea, which is our natural frontier, and which, guarded by a line of floating castles, opposes a formidable barrier of moveable fortresses in every direction against the designs of an invader. France, with her triple lines of defence towards her northern

frontier, cannot present such a terrible bulwark against the irruptions of her enemies. To effect a mere landing upon this island (for conquest is out of the question), while she is destitute of a navy competent to encounter our squadrons, her invading armament must run the following gauntlet: it must come out with a force adequate to the nature of the experiment, which cannot be accomplished in one tide; it must be exposed to the destructive fire of our blockading fleet during the passage of the Channel; it must next receive a similar salute from our in-shore squadron; then from our smaller craft and sea fenceables; and it must silence the fire of our batteries, which now present a line of adamant on every vulnerable part of the coast. The whole of this fiery ordeal must be sustained before a disembarkation can be attempted; and when at length those squalid skeletons destined to effect our ruin have landed, under every disadvantageous circumstance, they will have to form, and *defend* themselves (for attack they could not in such a state of mind and body) against an impetuous charge of armed patriots, fresh for action, masters of their ground, flushed with the recollection of their forefathers' glory, and conscious that on their native soil, and by their vigorous arms, the liberties of the world will be eternally fixed. All this must take place before the enemy can have penetrated *one* league into the interior of our country.

On the other hand, if we direct our attention to the physical strength of France, compared with her political relations, we shall find, that she has not quite so many legions to spare for the subjugation of this island, as some persons are inclined to believe. In our opinion, France is not in a state to dispense with their services at home. The extensive line of territory which they have to guard, stretching from the Zuyder Zee to the Bay of Naples, throughout which, almost every inhabitant is a secret enemy, places the French armies in the attitude of *defence*, rather than of invasion. One hundred and forty thousand are required to keep Italy in awe; 20,000, distributed about the frontiers of Switzerland, watch over the counter-revolutionary spirit of its people; 40,000 are cantoned in Holland, where they officiate in the various capacities of police spies, custom-house officers, auxiliary troops, and highway robbers; there are 30,000 of these collectors of revenue in Hanover; the sea-ports and two hundred fortresses demand at least 70,000 men; and our Imperial Self cannot be secure in our good capital, with less than 10,000 choice executioners. So that on a moderate calculation, there is full employment marked out for 310,000 of the half million of myrmidons, whose name has terrified Europe; the remnant compose that army of heroes, who are to restore the liberty of the seas, to beat and subdue an armed people, not very remarkable for pusilla-

nimity, with the best of sovereigns at their head, their wives, children, and altars at their backs.

We conclude, therefore, that ALL IS SAFE AT HOME ; and that Buonaparte himself entertains this opinion is evident, from the intimation he has recently given to Government, that he is not inimical to peace.

IRELAND.

[The following important letters upon the state of Ireland we received from a clergyman of the established church, who is not less respected for his patriotism, than universally admired for his literary abilities : they unfold very interesting details of the state of that country.]

LETTER I.

November 19th, 1804.

IN consequence of your desire to know my sentiments on the present state of parties in Ireland, their objects and views, with the moral and physical state of the country, &c. I shall freely tell you what has occurred to me on the subject, reserving to myself the liberty of enlarging further on a future occasion, as I may have further opportunities of information.

With regard to the parties in Ireland, in order to understand them and appreciate their character, it will be necessary to take notice of the circum-

stances that gave rise to the two grand divisions, the Orangemen, and their antagonists, known first by the name of Defenders, but who since have been distinguished by various denominations: the latter were Catholics. When the volunteers, who consisted of both persuasions, were disembodied about the conclusion of the American war, a delay, probably accidental, in the delivery of their arms by some Catholics, raised a suspicion among some ignorant Protestants of the lower class in the county of Armagh, of intended mischief; this was aggravated by a drunken skirmish in a fair between the two parties, between whom hostilities of this kind had occasionally broken out since the time of King William: the lower sort of Protestants there proceeded to execute the order of Government themselves; and by night, or at *break of day* (whence their name), plundered the Catholic houses in the neighbourhood, of their arms. This passed with impunity. *They* who could have suppressed these outrages are chargeable with great neglect, and by many accused of connivance, as the criminals *were freeholders, and* were *useful* on elections. Revenge produced retaliation, and many atrocities were committed on both sides. A truce or peace was made, with the infraction of which, I believe, the Catholics are justly accused; at least I never could learn what *new* provocation they met with. This inflamed the quarrel to a degree of virulence unknown be-

fore ; the inhabitants of entire hamlets and villages of Catholics were driven from their homes, with written orders to go “ to hell or to Connaught,” with threats of death if they disobeyed. Now, at least effectual measures ought to have been taken for securing the peace of the country, by proclaiming large rewards for seizing the offenders ; or parcelling out the country in districts, according to Alfred’s regulations, each to be responsible for any enormity committed within its limits : this, to my knowledge, was earnestly recommended. Meantime, in 1792, the Defenders (as the party first aggrieved had denominated themselves) rose in tumultuary bodies by night, plundered the Protestants’ houses of arms in *their* turn, and spread terror and devastation almost to the gates of Dublin ; the streets were crowded with country gentlemen and their families flocking to town, as I myself witnessed. The south of Ireland was still pacific, but the storm was collecting there ; secret meetings were held among the Catholics of those provinces : the event shewed what was the subject of their deliberations. “ Anticipation,” they argued, “ is better than revenge ; it was no casual outrage which gave rise to those disturbances ; the plan of our inbred enemy is total extirpation ; and if we do not join our brethren now in arms, we, when they are subdued, must expect nothing but to share their fate.” The revolutionary ideas propagated by France about

this time gave plausibility and force to these arguments, which were industriously disseminated by the new body of *United Irishmen*, who about this time began to distinguish themselves. This added a virulence to the disorders, which had already spread so far, that they soon became incurable unless by the most violent means, the effect of which is well known.

Being a native of the north of Ireland, I had authentic intelligence of the origin and progress of this dreadful dissension there ; and residing during that whole period in the south, I could trace its effects in that quarter : whence it was no doubt to me *who* were the aggressors ; and whether their impunity arose from neglect or connivance, it only aggravates the guilt of those concerned. I do not excuse the dreadful atrocities committed during the late rebellion, I only state the provocation. Some time before, and during the rebellion, confessions extorted by the most cruel inflictions, involved often the innocent as well as the guilty ; often the spirit of the sufferer was invincible. That the memory of these events still rankled in the soul, is highly probable : how far the spirit of revenge may be lulled asleep, or at what awful crisis it may break forth, is a subject of anxious conjecture. Imagination seems to hear the whispers of their secret convention : “ We have been goaded to rebellion, and subdued with circumstances that marked us as the outcasts of

society ;—a remnant of us have been saved ; new prospects, new privileges have been held forth, which never were realized ; a foreign foe again invites our aid ; we are stigmatized at home—let us render ourselves formidable by assistance from abroad.” If such should be the tenour of their consultations, it is high time to ask, how is the danger to be obviated ? I will not venture to reply, “ It is by giving them the entire right of citizens ; it is by cementing our union with them, not by blood, but by the generous policy of ancient Rome, who extended her civic rights among the conquered nations : let us give them unsullied and without exception to our brethren ; then they will defend that constitution with spirit, in all whose benefits they enjoy the fullest participation.”

This procedure might, however, be attended with constitutional inconveniences in the present state of affairs, some of which could not be easily obviated ; however, this much seems to be certain, that *every* probable means of conciliating the Catholics ought to be adopted. On a general view, suppose the utmost extent of privilege granted to their wish, and supposing they *did* return some members of their own communion to the Imperial Parliament, I should sooner expect that *they* should lay aside their old prejudices there, than that they should be able to communicate them to others. Whether this would contri-

bute to extend the benefits of the Union, is not for me to determine ; but I mention this principally for the illustration of another generous measure, now said to be under deliberation, viz. the additional emoluments recommended to be given to the Catholic clergy. In *their* present distressed condition, they are attached to their flocks as their only support ; but they are kept aloof from that society which could invigorate their minds, polish their manners, and give that liberal cast of sentiment, the want of which is at all times a misfortune, and often the cause of crimes under the influence of a conscience ill informed.

I have some time had opportunities of observing the good effects of a familiarity between Catholic priests and the Protestant gentry of their neighbourhood. When the former, from superiority of character, circumstances, or education, were qualified to associate with the latter, the liberality of sentiment and loyalty of such ecclesiastics were conspicuous on many trying occasions. The priest of a neighbouring parish of this character (now titular bishop of D——) shewed himself such a friend to clerical establishment, that he wrote in defence of tithes, against a dissenting demagogue who published an invective against the hierarchy. It is true, the congregations of such priests often shew a jealousy of what they deem heretical attachment in their clergy ; but even this alienation has an evident tendency to weaken the bonds of

a superstition often dangerous to the state; at least, there seems to be something analogical to this in the present situation of the Dissenters under the influence of the *regium donum*, which the hostile wits of the republican party call a *raging *dæmon**. It has alienated the affections of many of the latter so much, to think that their pastors should be paid by Government, that several of them already have publicly and formally united with the established church in a neighbouring parish.

For this, however, there are some peculiar reasons which contributed to the effect, which, as they tend to illustrate the subject of some of your inquiries, shall be the subject of another letter from, &c. &c.



LETTER II.

26th November 1804.

IN addition to the account I gave of the rise of parties here, I shall just advert to the circumstances that gave rise to the strange coalition between the Dissenters and Catholics. Many of the former had been guilty of the first wanton acts of aggression against the latter; but while the spirit of retaliation, inflamed by religious difference, rendered the middle counties of Ireland a scene of reciprocal outrage, a silent current was advancing from the north, which seemed first to reconcile

the contending elements, but which contained the principles of a more dangerous fermentation. Even before the commencement of hostilities in 1793, French emissaries had been dispersed over all parts of the kingdom, particularly in Ulster, where they and their Hibernian agents persuaded the contending parties that Britain enjoyed their mutual devastations; that she fomented the disturbance by the known art of creating disunion, for the purpose of extending power. This sophistry was too successful among the Presbyterians, whose republican bias gave additional force to its operation. For a considerable time the effects were only seen in seditious publications, till, in the course of events, they were partly led by prospects of Gallic liberty, and partly driven to open rebellion (before their schemes were matured), by the vigilance of Administration. The atrocities committed by some of the Catholics in the south, which, though inexcusable, have been in some measure accounted for before, disgusted their Presbyterian allies in the north, and tended to reconcile them gradually, but, I believe, effectually, to the existing government; nor is there the least prospect that *they* will ever again combine with a party from whom they have been habitually alienated by former and recent events, not to mention the known effect of religious prejudices; which, though lulled asleep for a time, have now regained their ancient degree of vigour. Their

mutual distrust and alienation contributed in no small degree to the advancement of the UNION. The Protestants *in general*, and, I believe, with some justice, feared that, on the old system of Irish politics, the Catholics would gain an ascendancy even in Parliament, through the influence of the late franchise, and by the factious struggles of their adherents in the Irish senate for further emancipation. *Those demagogues were principally barristers.* On the other hand, the Catholics were more willing to trust the magnanimous and comprehensive policy of a British senate for more complete advantages, than to their fellow subjects at home, whom they probably looked upon as an irritated and triumphant faction. This detail I thought necessary, to shew you how our parties are balanced, and how effectually they counteract each other's dangerous tendencies: the strength of the one lies in the north, the principal seat of industry and commerce; that of the other is in the south. The present moderation and beneficent views of Government will, I hope, preserve a general, if not a perfect, equilibrium. Whatever remnant of a republican spirit yet subsists among the Presbyterians or Catholics, renders them inimical to the usurper to an uncommon degree of animosity; they look upon him as the destroyer of their favourite scheme, and cling to the British constitution as comprehending the only species of

genuine freedom which can be combined with domestic happiness and national stability*.

I shall only add one observation; that, if any tendency to rebellion, or to a junction with our foreign enemies, should still remain among the Catholics, by a more complete participation of constitutional benefits, every pretext for discontent will be entirely destroyed; so that no motive could then remain but undisguised malice, and a predilection for slavery.

It will not be necessary to dwell long on the character, habitudes, and views of the remaining party of Orangemen. Their prejudice against the Catholics will occasion some murmurs on the subject of Protestant ascendancy, should the Catholic claims be admitted in their full extent; but *they* ought to remember *who* were the first aggressors. The Peep-of-day Boys (as they were called) merged so gradually and insensibly into Orangemen, that the marks of identity and diversity are to this day as hard to be distinguished as the new and old materials of Sir John Cutler's stockings. This is, however, incontrovertible, that numbers of *Peep-of-day Men* became Orangemen at a very early period of the disturbances, and that the latter made their first appearance in the very district which had been the scene of the first unprovoked

* We can answer for a similar motive having recalled thousands in England to the good old principles of the constitution. E.

outrages of the former. The merits of the *genuine* loyalists who bore the name of Orangemen at a later period, I allow; the diffusion of that spirit had a very beneficial effect at an alarming crisis; but *that very circumstance*, and the odium annexed to that name in the south, where I then resided, inflamed and exasperated by political and religious hatred, produced the most baneful consequences, prior to, and during, the period of the rebellion. My information on this subject is neither derived from Catholics, Orangemen, nor Presbyterians, but from members of the established church, whose moderation, abilities, and exalted rank, with the advantage of local residence, preclude every idea of partiality or of ignorance.

There is, however, no doubt of the loyalty and public spirit of the Orangemen: their attachment to the constitution has been very conspicuous on the most trying occasions; sometimes, perhaps, it was a little too warm, but the cause of those ebullitions has subsided in late years, as the diffusion of public spirit has prevailed gradually over party distinctions. *Their dispersion in every village and hamlet in this country is not without its political advantages, as their vigilance renders them a check upon any seditious fermentation which might arise; and such is their attention to every movement of their former enemies, now their neighbours, that no spy, no incendiary, no emissary can make his appearance where they reside, but he is*

immediately detected, and either seized or obliged to fly. Several instances of this occurred in those years that have passed since the rebellion, particularly about the time of the insurrection in Dublin last year.

This, I hope, will suffice, as what occurs to me in answer to your queries on Irish parties and their objects, which, to the Catholics, appear to be a full enjoyment of the privileges of British subjects, to whom, as they are already freeholders, I do not see how those advantages can be denied, according to the spirit of the common law of the land. The object of the Presbyterians, a spirited, independent race, too much elated, perhaps, with the advantages of opulence and commerce, was, and probably is, a species of political freedom, which the late events in France shew can only be enjoyed under the British government. The church of England, which includes all that is truly respectable of the Orange party, were always attached to the constitution, and early saw the necessity of an UNION, in order to protect them against the more numerous parties, by a closer connexion with the British establishment, and to disarm those parliamentary factions, which, from sinister views, often impeded the counsels and frustrated the designs of the honest and wise.

To the measures of the UNION there were some opponents of considerable abilities, whose arguments are to be considered with this cautionary re-

mark, that *their* exertion was probably invigorated by the consideration that such a measure would diminish much of their political consequence. Their predictions of desolation and degradation have not been verified by the event: these predictions were re-echoed by a crowd of barristers, who, from similar motives, were hostile to this measure. As the temple of *Virtue* in old Rome formed the avenue to the temple of *Honour*, an use somewhat, but not exactly, similar was made by this *gens togata* of the borough and the senate-house. Its gilded vane was the pole-star to many a camel-driver through the dry desert of Littleton, the *black forest* of Salkeld; its floor was the fairy ground where the seals and maces danced before many an eye, rolling in frenzy of various fineness, enlightened by the example of one successful pleader*.—This was the career that led to consequence and emolument; this was the altar at which principle was often sacrificed. Both antecedent to, and after the rebellion, they made the House resound with the claims of faction; one hand was raised to beckon the multitude, the other was extended to receive the bribe. Mirabeau and the philosopher of Geneva often supplied them with topics even there, which met with applause without, and were heard with silent indignation within. Impunity was ensured by the complexion

* The late Lord Clare.

of the times. Their speeches formed the chief ornament of the seditious papers of that season. The publishers boasted the anonymous assistance of several of that class; they still make a great part of *The Beauties of the Press* †, an English publication, culled from a rebellious Irish paper of that name. I will not assert that Godwin's Political Justice ever furnished a topic of seditious declamation in the House; but this is an undoubted fact, that one of his intimate friends, then a senator, whose orations will be long remembered, indulged in a long digressive philippic against the *Pursuits of Literature*, which had made the infamy of his friend immortal. Macbeth stood aghast at the visionary steel; but men could be named, who gave the signal to no *air-drawn daggers*, ambiguously indeed in the House, but more explicitly in conversation, and even in their printed addresses. Not that all of them meant to excite rebellion, or to lay the nation in blood: their eyes were only open to their own ambitious prospects; they were blind to the probable consequence of their harangues; they thought to secure those emoluments that Government could bestow, by operating upon its fears; they meant to ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm; and clamoured loudly against the Union, because that, and probably that alone, could have frustrated their selfish

† The title-page is marked "London."

views. The enemies of that measure were not all of this dangerous character; but almost all they who wrote against it were notoriously subject to some private bias, which was generally of the *professional* kind. With regard to the former, as their audaciousness arose in proportion to their impunity, and the dangers of foreign enemies increased, we might have probably heard our walls resound with the politics as well as the philosophy of France, but for that happy prevention.

If the Union had produced no other effect than rendering the country tranquil, and giving opportunity to its natural advantages to operate without disturbance, it would on that account only have been an inestimable benefit. Besides putting an end to those dangerous political fermentations mentioned above, it suppressed that species of jobbing which was the disgrace of the country. But we expect more from it, in the introduction of wealth from the extension of trade and manufactures, and the improvement of agriculture; advantages that mutually support each other, and increase population, which at this critical time is the strength and bulwark of the country. The more these advantages are extended, the attachment to the soil, and to that constitution which supports these benefits, will become more conspicuous. The importance of the British islands to each other is now more clearly perceived; they are seen by each other, as it were, in a more

majestic point of view, and through a more awful medium: they perceive in each other the means of mutual defence. England by herself, and England through Ireland, will be invincible, if the remains of ancient animosity be discharged from the minds of my countrymen by an extension of that liberal policy which has been so happy in its commencement. Querulous declamation cannot always be prevented, but much may be done to put a stop to rational complaint.

An illustrious instance of that genuine spirit of liberality which now guides the councils of England with respect to Ireland, occurred in the repeal of that law which threatened some detriment to the linen-trade. This was a conciliating measure, which is an earnest and pledge of more; it gives a new stimulative to industry of one species, while *agriculture is extending with an astonishing degree of rapidity, and the value of land daily increasing*. From my window I see a tract of corn country, that twenty years ago was a desolate moor, covered with heath, or intersected with turf-pits. This improvement commenced before the Union, it is true; but the facility of intercourse between the two countries, in consequence of that measure, enhances the price of all commodities produced here. Population is evidently increasing, notwithstanding the numbers who some years ago emigrated to America, scarcely an individual of whom (as far as I could learn)

was driven by distress, but by a restless wandering spirit, or a panic terror of invasion; and such of them as I had any opportunity of hearing from, expressed deep repentance for their rashness.

But there is a subject originating from agriculture, the financial and moral connexions of which render it highly interesting to this country—I mean the distilleries of Ireland: that they promote agriculture, and increase the revenue, cannot be denied; but the effect of spirituous liquors on the health of the natives, and the happiness of society, has been often lamented by the enlightened politician as well as the moralist. It was observed, that during the years of scarcity, when the poor were totally deprived of their wonted beverage, in that epidemic disorder which ensued, they who could afford to swallow their usual dose of liquid fire, often fell victims to the disease, exasperated by this habitual indulgence; while the poor seemed to owe their preservation to their involuntary abstinence. In towns, where this liquor is easily obtained, and easily adulterated by deleterious mixtures, where exorbitant wages enable the mechanic to support his family with mere necessaries by four days work, and spend the rest in idleness and intoxication, when an infectious disorder comes, it often sweeps off whole families: this, it is true, may be owing to a variety of other causes; but certain it is, that of those who escape, the majority are the habitually sober.

This, however, I am afraid, rather will admit a palliative than an effectual remedy; much indeed possibly might be done by a heavy tax on home consumption, and a drawback operating as a bounty upon exportation. Vast quantities of malt spirits have been exported to England since the Union; and I should think, that particularly in the northern countries, where a stimulus of that kind seems necessary to counteract the effects of the climate, taken in moderation, there might be a very extensive demand. Here scarce a season passes that is not distinguished often by the sudden death, oftener by the untimely fates of those unfortunate self-destroyers; our hospitals are crowded by its victims; and even in the abodes of opulence and health one meets frequently some spectral form, the picture of beggary and nakedness, a living monument of disease occasioned by this most destructive species of intemperance. Nothing I know of calls more for the humane interferences of the Legislature than this deplorable habit, if any remedy could be applied.

This evil prevails most in this manufacturing part of the country; it adds its virulence also to the local distresses of the southern peasant; in the grazing counties, *his* garden pays the tithe of the parson and maintains the priest; for, by a mere *vote of the House of Commons in Ireland*, the proprietor of black cattle pays none. From this originated most, if not all, the riots and dis-

contents of the south, which have afflicted that province, in one shape or other, above forty years. The *Union* in its progress was objected to, as it would give the clergy of Ireland a claim to this species of tithes; the bishops relinquished it for themselves in the name of the clergy, but I never heard that the clergy acquiesced on this occasion. How far a prescription of about fifty or sixty years would operate against this claim, I am not lawyer enough to determine; but this exemption gives an *appearance* of more profit in that fine soil in grazing than in tillage. This is only *appearance*; for I have often observed the rapid fortunes made by the plough in the midland counties, even under the burden of tithe, and where one crop must pay all the demands of two years; but under the contrary system, the finest part of the island is depopulated, and oxen thrive, when every rood of ground might maintain its man. But I know this is a subject surrounded with difficulties on all sides. Oxen are necessary as well as men, and oxen must be fed; yet what numbers are fed *here* in this comparatively barren soil, by the refuse of distilleries! In the mean time, in the south, a long and bloody contest has been carried on between the man and the beast, whom he looks on as the usurper of his fertile plains. This war has continued at intervals these thirty years and more: the man hamstrings the innocent brute; and when he

is taken he is hanged, but he oftener escapes with impunity.

I am sorry to conclude this letter with such disgusting pictures of suicide and devastation; but instances of the former are frequent, and even of the latter some examples oblige me to mention the fact, though I may be mistaken as to the origin. This, however, naturally leads me to say something of the national character of the old Milesian race; which shall be the subject of my next.

[To be continued.]

[** The Second Number of this Work, containing Sketches on the State of Europe, and our Political Relations—on the Middlesex Election—the Spanish War—the State of Parties—Irish Politics, &c. will be published on Saturday the 26th instant, at Twelve o’Clock, and will be continued every Fortnight.]

January 12, 1805.

POLITICAL SKETCHES

IN

1805.

N° II.

SKETCH OF THE STATE OF EUROPE.

THE fate of Europe depends upon the fortunes and political relations of the powers which preponderate in the general system. If the balance be preserved among these; if their political existence and internal organization be safely established; if, by their mutual action and reaction, they protect and secure the independence of the smaller states (so much, at least, as the weak can be secure in a community with the strong); if there is no dangerous preponderance to be perceived, which threatens to oppress the rest, or to involve them in endless war; we may rest satisfied with the federal constitution which fulfils these most essential points, notwithstanding many errors and defects *.

* Gentz.

It is evident, from the above definition of what constitutes the balance of power, that the federal system of Europe, which was destroyed by the French Revolution, has now a chance of being revived with greater lustre than before. The disorganization and decay which followed that terrible misfortune, reduced the continent to a condition, from which nothing but a courageous league of governments, supported by the zeal and the union of their subjects, can possibly extricate it. If it be finally determined upon by those who yet possess the means, to fix upon a permanent basis, the independence of those countries, which, for the safety of the whole European confederacy, ought to be free, it will not be difficult to prove, that the moment is arrived, wherein their combined efforts will be no longer problematical. Whoever surveys the present state of the continent, and contrasts the disposition and intrinsic force of the greater powers with the lukewarm and exhausted predicament in which they all appeared at the time of the peace of Luneville, will be qualified to form a tolerable estimate of the influence which a *public league* for the deliverance of Europe is likely to create amongst our enemies as well as our friends; but, if we attempt to think and feel for the men of the continent in the same manner as we think and feel for ourselves, we shall be liable to err, and disappointment will be the reward of our presumption. As far as this

question is concerned, the science of politics is nothing more or less than the science of profiting by circumstances ; for, the attempt to form a system, upon which we may fancy ourselves entitled to act mechanically, would be as vain as the idea of ascertaining, with mathematical precision, all the operations of the human understanding. It is of the greatest importance that we should retain this truth carefully in all our political reasonings. Numberless considerations press upon the attentive observer, before he can take upon himself to pronounce, with certainty, concerning the interests and views of the continental powers. The safest method; therefore, of investigation, is, to place ourselves, for a moment, in the situation of the inhabitants of the countries under our inquiry; to penetrate, as far as it is practicable, into the views of their respective cabinets; and thus enlightened by experience, to draw our conclusions, not as Britons merely, but as members of the great commonwealth of Europe. Every step that is to be taken, henceforward, must be measured according to this rule, if we look for ultimate success ; and the errors of past times must be remembered only to be avoided in future. The faults and misfortunes of all parties have brought the world into such a dilemma, that the business of this age is principally confined to the recovery and reparation of what has been forfeited by irresolution and indifference.

When we reflect upon the altered spirit of some of the continental powers, the dignified manner in which they have ceased to interchange all amicable relation with France; and the nearer connexion which that circumstance necessarily occasions between the former and our own government, it is natural to infer, that measures are in contemplation for diminishing the exorbitant and unjust power of the enemy. Even if Russia, Sweden, and Turkey, should take no *active* part in the present war, still their secession from France must be regarded as an event which cannot fail to contribute towards the restoration of the social system of Europe. But, before we enter upon this subject, it will be expedient first to inquire into the internal state and foreign relations of that power, whose rapacious and violent policy entails upon mankind all those evils which were generated by the French Revolution. The subject is too important to be overlooked, and it should be discussed with sobriety and moderation.

FRANCE.

The form of government which the *Législator* of France has been pleased to establish over his subjects, is no otherwise deserving of our notice than as far as it makes a component part of that system of aggrandizement, which it is calculated to invigorate. By collecting the whole force of the state into one hand, it naturally strengthens

the power of the Government both at home and abroad, and enables it to pursue its ambitious projects with greater facility, promptitude, and vigour. Hence, it is not necessary for us to inquire whether the assumption of the imperial dignity by Mons. Buonaparte, be politic or not in itself and in its relation to France, but whether it affords any accession of power in the exercise of an undue influence over foreign states? In other words, is the Emperor of France a more formidable adversary now, than the First Consul of France was a year ago? If it should appear that his foreign influence has not received any increase from this change, it is a matter of perfect indifference to us, by what title he is to be approached hereafter. The acknowledgment of his new title is a question of political expediency, which must be determined according to the relative ability of the states with which he has formed any connexion. Hitherto it has been recognised only by two powers of superior magnitude, Austria and Prussia; both of which, we are persuaded, would have been much more gratified with the intelligence of his elevation in any other place than to the throne of Charlemagne. For, it is not the imperial title that is to be feared, but the nature of the government and personal character of the man who wears it.

Legitimate princes, who have ascended the thrones of their ancestors, cannot naturally have

any communion of interests with a fortunate adventurer, who, by perfidy, treason, and bloodshed, has paved his way to the throne of his sovereign. Yet such is the lamentable state of affairs, and the contracted politics of modern times, that the most ancient houses of Europe do not disdain to sanction his usurpations, even in defiance of their private sentiments, their public character, and the hazardous influence of example.

With respect to those inferior states which have beheld their own humiliation in the persons of their princes as spectators at the coronation of Monsieur Buonaparte, justice as well as humanity dictate that they are entitled to our pity, by no means to our contempt. For the want of power to resent insult, is no evidence of the loss of character. It only proves that princes are liable to experience the severest reverses of fortune; and that, when in the eyes of all mankind they appear to be most degraded, each may comfort himself with the recollection that he was not single in this career of dishonour. If the voice of expostulation could make itself heard with effect, it should obtrude itself into the cabinets of Berlin and Vienna, and there rebuke that untimely and impolitic jealousy of each other, by which the subjugation of all the secondary princes of the continent has, in a great measure, been guarantied. However, there is nothing unexpected in this abject condition of the continental princes, for it was foreseen and

deprecated long ago. "To those," said Mr. Burke, " who do not love to contemplate the fall of human greatness, I do not know a more mortifying spectacle, than to see the assembled majesty of the crowned heads of Europe waiting as patient suitors in the antechamber of regicide. They wait, it seems, until the sanguinary tyrant shall have snorted away the fumes of the indigested blood of his sovereign. Then, when, sunk on the down of usurped pomp, he shall have sufficiently indulged his meditations with what monarch he shall next glut his ravening maw, he may condescend to signify that it is his pleasure to be awake ; and that he is at leisure to receive the proposals of his high and mighty clients for the terms on which he may respite the execution of the sentence he has passed upon them. At the opening of those doors, what a sight it must be to behold the plenipotentiaries of royal impotence, in the precedence which they will intrigue to obtain, and which will be granted to them according to the seniority of their degradation, sneaking into the regicide presence, and with the relics of the smile, which they had dressed up for the levee of their masters, still flickering on their curled lips, presenting the faded remains of their courtly graces, to meet the scornful, ferocious, sardonic grin of a bloody ruffian, who, whilst he is receiving their homage, is measuring them with his eye, and fitting to their size the slider of his guillotine !"

It cannot be denied that every power which voluntarily ratifies the usurpation of Buonaparte, is in some degree an accessory in sanctioning a very dangerous precedent: for although such an example is not likely to be often repeated, yet it behoves statesmen who live in a military age, to be very circumspect in their deliberations, before they confirm with the force of public authority, the claims of any successful usurper. Of all the calamities which threaten the peace of society, an usurpation raised upon the basis, and maintained by the force of absolute despotism, is one more calculated to break down the fences of political subordination, and to demolish every outwork of the social system, than the fanatical impulses and freaks of democracy; for the effects of the latter are ephemeral, but duration is the principle of the former.

Many persons were led to believe that the day of the coronation would be the first and last of Buonaparte's reign; that either a popular insurrection would cast him to the ground; or, that the army, uniting with the inconstant Parisian populace, would seize that moment to redeem the freedom of which they had been forcibly deprived. Never was an expectation so little justified, either by the genius of the people, the character of the French army, or the principles of the leading men. Such is the frivolous levity of that nation, that there is not a man in Paris, who would not

have seen with pleasure every vestige of civil liberty swept from the face of the earth, rather than have been disappointed in the sight of that day's exhibition. In addition to this, we should reflect, that liberty having never been understood, its beneficent effects have never been felt, in France. From the dethronement of their lawful Sovereign to the hour of the accession of their Emperor, that people have been the dupes of ignorant, bold, and flagitious projectors, who with systematic pertinacity subverted every institution, by which liberty could be upheld, or respected. Disgusted with their vain attempts, the very name of freedom is either forgotten, despised, or used as a passport to Cayenne ; while the founders of the Republic have shewn themselves the foremost to turn into ridicule all their former principles, and, by one comprehensive edict of vassalage, to pronounce their countrymen unfit to enjoy the blessings of liberty *.

There is something extremely contemptible in these frequent surmises and whispers concerning the probability of Buonaparte's death. They denote feebleness and cowardice ; and if they were realized to-day, would not the fears of their authors raise up another Buonaparte to-morrow ?

* See the speech of François de Neufchateau, president of the Conservative Senate, on presenting Buonaparte with the decree which conferred on the latter the whole of France and its population in fee simple.

That he is the inveterate enemy of the King and people of Great Britain, no one can doubt; and on this very account we ought, as a brave and generous people, to reject such discourses with indignation, and resolve to meet him on the field of battle, and there alone dispute with him the freedom of mankind.

Upon the subject of the assumption of the imperial title, we shall abstain from making any further observations at present; reserving to ourselves, however, the right of delivering our opinion, whenever it may be agitated as a national concern.

It might have been expected, from the alteration in the form of the French Government, that a suitable change would have taken place in its policy; that, in affecting imperial dignity, Monsieur Buonaparte would have tried to imitate imperial manners; that the polished urbanity of a court would have supplanted the ferocious habits of the camp; and that, in soliciting the acknowledgment of foreign countries, the new Emperor should have been the first to give a substantial pledge of his intention to respect those laws by which nations are enabled to maintain their mutual intercourse. But these were delusive conjectures. The imperial route is marked at its commencement, with a trait of unexampled outrage. In consequence of an order signed by the French Minister of Police, Sir George Rum-

bold, though shrouded by the sanctity of a character that even barbarous tribes revere, though protected by that ægis of inviolability which formerly sufficed to render the person of an accredited minister sacred, was forcibly seized on the territory of a neutral state, and transferred to Paris; where his person was confined, and his papers were inspected by the modern dispensers of public justice. The peremptory interference of the King of Prussia caused his immediate release; but his papers remain in the hands of the French Government; so that, unless they are restored, a new distinction will be created in the law of nations, between the inviolability of the person of a minister, and the responsibility of his papers. No apology of any kind has been offered to the sovereigns of Europe for this violation of public law; not even an explanation has been attempted. This bold stroke of imperial sway has not been lost upon Europe. By commencing his reign with such *éclat*, he has effectually alienated from his interests every sovereign who has the power to renounce all connexion with him; and by those who have received him into the society of princes, he is considered as an intruder, whom they are forced to admit on account of the disproportion between his power and their weakness.

Although the arrest of Sir George Rumbold has been universally reprobated, even by the Opposition-joiners in this country, yet a palliative

has been administered to the public; and an attempt made to qualify its atrocity, by an appeal to a similar precedent, said to have been committed many years ago by the British Government.

In Cobbett's Weekly Political Register of December 22, 1804, the English language is defiled with the following apology for Buonaparte's crime:

“ It is not marked with peculiar novelty or atrocity. The jealous intrigues and subtle enterprises of one state, occasion similar proceedings to be adopted by another: and you have as little reason to look for an uniform reverence of the person of an ambassador, or an undeviating respect for a neutral territory, as you have to imagine your enemy's artillery should not be pointed against your fortresses, lest perchance it should sweep away some of their peaceable inhabitants. If, instead of giving way to these violent ebullitions of wrath and indignation, we were to *consult history*, we should find that similar transactions have passed again and again, and have found their apology in the policy of the times; in our own country indeed, and under the House of Brunswick, an example offers itself of as bold and irregular an exertion of power as that of which, in this our day, we so loudly and grievously complain. The history states, that in the year 1715, Charles XII. had formed a project to invade England, and was deep engaged with the English malcontents. George the First having received from different

quarters various information of this conspiracy, on his return from the continent ordered Count Gyl- lenburg, the Swedish ambassador, to be arrested in London ; and by his requisition Baron Goertz, the Swedish resident in Holland, was likewise ar- rested by order of the States General : their papers were seized and searched, and amongst them were found *ample proofs* of the suspected machinations. The foreign ministers expressed much astonish- ment and regret at the proceedings ; but Mr. Me- thuen, the Secretary of State, pleaded the *urgent necessity* which had compelled the King to this measure: and it does not appear that either the King or his Minister were on account of it either *likerel* or stigmatized throughout the rest of Eu- rope."

From the extract which we have laid before the public, we are furnished with another instance of the deceptive nature of historical allusions on which we commented in our first number. The truth of our observations is as completely eluci- dated in the present case, as in the refutation of Sir Robert Wilson's " painfully accurate resem- blance" between Great Britain and Carthage. In fact, the whole of the above statement is a forced misrepresentation of a measure warranted by the law of nations; and it has no more relation to the circumstance of Sir George Rumbold's arrest, than Sir Robert's narrative of the battle of Zama to the event as recorded in ancient history.

The case was this : In consequence of some intercepted letters, the British Government discovered that a scheme had been formed for the invasion of this country by the King of Sweden, in order to place the son of James the Second upon the throne. This project was devised by the extravagant genius of Baron Goertz, whose restless machinations, abetted by Alberoni in Spain, fostered the embers of civil war which were kindling in this country. Count Gyllenburg, the Swedish minister resident at London, instructed by Goertz, held several conferences with the principal malcontents, to whom he promised every support, and even went so far as to purchase six vessels in Britanny, with arms of all kinds, for the use of the conspirators. This plot, which Voltaire mentions as one *d'une espèce nouvelle* *, was carried on at the same time in England, France, and Russia, and its branches extended in secret from one end of Europe to the other.

The first intimation which our government received concerning these measures, was from the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France ; in consequence of which, Count Gyllenburg was secured, with all his papers ; and about the same time Baron Goertz was seized, with his papers, in Holland, *by order of the Dutch Government, at the request of the King of England* †.

* Hist. de Charles XII. liv. 8.

† Smollett's Contin. vol. i. p. 345.

At first the foreign ministers took the alarm, and remonstrated to the ministry upon this outrage committed against the law of nations; but in consequence of the circular letters addressed to them from the two secretaries Stanhope and Methuen, assuring them that in a day or two they should be acquainted with the reasons that induced the King to take such an extraordinary step, they became generally satisfied with the intimation. The publication of the papers belonging to the two Swedish ministers, dispelled every doubt concerning the legality of the measures that were adopted against them.

From the succinct account which we have given of that transaction, every one must perceive, that the case of the Swedish envoys is wholly dissimilar to that of Sir George Rumbold. The latter was arrested in a neutral country, not in consequence of a previous application to the government whose protection he claimed, but in obedience to the order of a police minister in another state. The manner also of the seizure aggravates its atrocity; it was effected by a violation of neutrality, by the march of an armed force, commanded by a general officer, into the territory of a neutral state, without the permission or even the knowledge of its government.

But the case was very different with Gyllenburg. *He* was arrested conformably to the principles of the law of nations, for having himself violated

that law, and thereby forfeited the privileges which it grants to foreign ministers. Instead of conducting himself as became a minister of peace, he assumed the part of a conspirator against the government which protected him, and renounced his character as the representative of a crowned head, when, under this guise, he was fomenting a civil war in the country. "As Gyllenburg had violated," says Voltaire, "the law of nations, by conspiring against the prince to whom he was sent, they had a right to violate, without scruple, the same law in his person. The King of England did no more than what was just in arresting an enemy." It is true, the same author does not entertain the same opinion relative to the seizure of Goertz, which he calls "*une complaisance inouïe*" on the part of the States General for the King of England. There certainly is a distinction between the cases of Gyllenburg and Goertz; but if we consider, that, by the terms of the triple alliance, the Dutch had guaranteed the Protestant succession on the throne of England, and had stipulated to furnish to that power, which should be disturbed at home, or invaded from abroad, their proportion of ships and forces, it follows, that the arrest of Baron Goertz, who was clandestinely engaged in the excitement of a civil war in Britain, as well as in concerting the invasion of the country, was a measure comprehended within the spirit of their treaty with us. "It is a base

treachery," says Vattel *, " to take advantage of the inviolability of the ambassadorial character, for the purpose of plotting, in security, the ruin of those who respect that character—of laying snares for them—of clandestinely injuring them—of embroiling and ruining their affairs. What would be infamous and abominable in a private guest, shall that be allowable and becoming in the representative of a sovereign?" And when the same author treats upon what may be done to an ambassador forming dangerous plots and conspiracies, he lays down "the true rule of the law of nations," and applies it to cases exactly parallel to the one under our examination. We insert it in his own words.

" An ambassador cannot be punished, because he is independent ; and, for the reasons we have alleged, it is not proper to treat him as an enemy, till he himself proceeds to overt acts of violence : but we are justifiable in adopting against him every measure which the circumstances of the case may reasonably require for the purpose of defeating his machinations, and averting the evil which he has plotted. *If, in order to disconcert and prevent a conspiracy, it were necessary to arrest, or even put to death an ambassador, who animates and conducts it, I do not see why we should for a moment hesitate to take either of*

* Law of Nations, b. iv. c. 7. § 93.

those steps, not only because the safety of the state is the supreme law, but also because, independent of that maxim, the ambassador's own deeds give us a perfect and particular right to proceed to such extremities. A public minister, I grant, is independent, and his person is sacred; but it is unquestionably lawful to repel his attacks, whether of a secret or of an open nature, and to defend ourselves against him, whenever he acts either as an enemy or a traitor. And if we cannot accomplish our own preservation without harm thence resulting to him, it is he himself who has laid us under a necessity of not sparing him. On such an occasion, it may, with great truth, be asserted, that the minister has, by his own act, excluded himself from the protection of the law of nations. Suppose the Venetian Senate,—though apprized of the Marquis of Bedamar's conspiracy, and impressed with a thorough conviction of that minister's being the prime mover and director of the whole business,—had nevertheless been, in other particulars, destitute of sufficient information to enable them to crush the detestable plot,—suppose they had been uncertain with respect to the number and rank of the conspirators, the designs they had in agitation, and the particular quarter where the meditated mischief was to burst forth,—whether an intention was entertained of exciting a revolt among the marine or the land forces, or effecting the clan-

destine capture of some important fortress,— would they, under such circumstances, have been bound to suffer the ambassador to depart unmolested, and thus afford him an opportunity of joining and heading his accomplices, and of bringing his designs to a successful issue? No man will seriously answer in the affirmative. *The Senate therefore would have had a right to arrest the Marquis and all his household, and even to extort from them their detestable secret.*"

We have been thus particular in citing the whole passage, in order to rescue the character of the British Government from the imputation of a breach of that law of nations, which it has uniformly respected with a more punctilious veneration than any other Government in Europe. The rule established and elucidated above by Vattel, is precisely the same as Grotius promulgated above a century before, in his celebrated treatise *De Jure Belli et Pacis* *, wherein he expressly maintains, that, " to prevent any imminent danger, an ambassador may be both *imprisoned* and *examined*, special care being taken that the letters and papers then in their custody, should not be put out of the way or lost."

Upon the whole, we flatter ourselves that we have fully removed every idea of affinity between the cases mentioned in the Weekly Register ; that

* Lib. ii. c. 18. § 6.

the arrest of Count Gyllenburg took place in the country to which he had been sent ambassador, and whose rights he grossly abused ; while that of Sir George Rumbold was effected by foreign violence, and by the invasion of the territory of a neutral power, whose protection he had not forfeited by any departure from his duties as a minister ; and lastly, that the treasonable correspondence of Gyllenburg and Goertz was published to the world, which was satisfied with the justice of the measures we pursued ; whereas the person of Sir George Rumbold was reclaimed by a foreign power, who thus condemned the violation of the public law committed by the French Government, while the latter had the impudence to declare in its official Gazette, that “ his papers were correct,” and thereby pronounced, without intending it, a censure upon its own outrageous conduct.

But, to return from this digression to our sketch of the state of France, in its relation to the rest of Europe. We have already observed that the business of the present generation is, to recover and repair those bulwarks which improvidence had suffered to be dismantled, and the loss of which leaves Europe open to the power of France. This seems now to be the only true policy, which, under any prospect of permanent advantage, presents itself to another continental league ; for to count upon the co-operation of the

royalists in France, or to expect insurrections in its interior, no longer occupies and distracts the attention of statesmen. France must be reconnoitred as she stands, in the fullness of her military array, surrounded by conquests and vassal communities. To accomplish this purpose satisfactorily, we must form an accurate judgment of her foreign influence, her internal organization, and the personal character of her master.

First, *Of the foreign Influence of France.*

The peace of Luneville terminated the most unfortunate war ever waged upon the continent, by giving to France a dangerous preponderance in the affairs of Europe. Every dispassionate reasoner foresaw that this paramount influence would be the last and most important effect of the dissolution of that confederacy, which had been formed for the preservation of European independence. From the moment that the most warlike nations grounded their arms, in the spirit of humiliation, they assigned over to France the dictatorship of Europe; and it would have been fortunate for the latter if that title conveyed no other idea with it than the enjoyment of a nominal authority. No provision having been made against the tyrannical exercise of this power, we cannot wonder at its being abused. In other times, whenever France betrayed any dangerous designs upon the peace and safety of others, there

were always several powers in Europe able to restrain its attempts, and to curb its ambitious views of inordinate aggrandizement. It was constantly counterpoised by Austria, Prussia, or England ; and if any of these was not singly strong enough to counteract its efforts, it was then effected by a judicious combination of their means. France was, moreover, surrounded by several independent states, which, though comparatively of little weight, yet served to break the force of the first attack ; gave time to the leading powers to assemble and prepare for defence ; and, united with them, contributed to preserve the balance at all times. These states, which might have been truly pronounced the advanced works of the rest of Europe against the irruptions of France, have been completely incorporated by that power, or are become tributary to it ; so that they are converted into military stations, whence, on the commencement of hostilities, the French are able to open the campaign in the heart of Germany.

Before the revolution, France possessed a considerable share of influence in every part of the continent, and exercised it with moderation ; but now, instead of a share only, she actually absorbs the whole influence, and commands imperiously in Holland, the Austrian Netherlands, Switzerland, Piedmont, Italy; a part of Germany, and Spain ; so that, with the exception of a few princes of the Empire, who cannot injure her, she has limited

the number of states, which she permits to exist without being subject to her interference in their internal economy, to five, viz. Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sweden, and Denmark.

Unfortunately, the political geography of Europe is so changed, that it is now utterly impossible for any one or two of those powers to resist by force the encroachments of France, without risking the danger of having to contend on their own frontiers in a defensive war against the French; and every one knows that a defensive is the most distressing of all wars. But, is the continent so humbled; are its means so diminished, that no power can hold up its head against France without inevitable ruin? This is not our opinion: we insist, however, that there is not a power in Europe in a situation to carry on hostilities against France, *without the co-operation of England*. With the force of this country constantly hanging over the most vulnerable side of the French empire, a grand effort to liberate the continent could not fail of success. The period too is remarkably favourable for such an enterprise: for if any war is likely to be conducted with spirit and zeal, that surely must be the one which may be emphatically described as the war of the British people against the ambition of one man. We offer to the oppressed world half a million of men in arms, and a navy which is undisputed sovereign of the seas. It must be evident, that we can maintain the in-

dependence of our country without the aid of foreign co-operation ; our alliance would prove therefore an accession to any league for general safety.

But it is not enough to say that France has extended her limits on all sides by conquest ; has added to the impregnability of her frontiers by new ramparts, and increased her influence over the neighbouring states in a formidable degree : the truth is, that, in her present state, she is contained by no limits. Every thing around her either is really, if not nominally, her territory and property, or may be made a part of her possessions, at the first convenient opportunity, by the nod of her sovereign. Spain, Italy, and Germany, without fortresses, without means of defence, without security, political or military, are open to the attacks of France ; and it now only depends upon the moderation and justice of the French Government (mere personal guarantees, which every moment may alter or destroy), whether France shall rule alone in the whole west of Europe, whether any law shall be obeyed but hers. If to this inordinate power, this extensive territory, this unlimited control over so many nations ; if, to all the former and present advantages of France, we add the terror which she has spread around her, what hope remains that Europe will recover its former state of tranquillity, and its respective powers that well-balanced equipoise by which they

were enabled to keep under the aspiring genius of universal conquest ?

Many circumstances have lately occurred, which, taken together, conspire to revive the drooping spirit of the continent.

There is at this time a reasonable prospect of the formation of a league for the express purpose of restricting the overgrown power of the enemy ; and as the faults of the late confederacy are now fully understood and deeply felt, there is a moral certainty that the inheritors of the evils which they introduced, will be governed by more liberal and magnanimous views. The insolence of France, in the raptures of her triumphs, the unshaken perseverance with which she extends her system of domination, the habitual disregard with which she treats the victims of her ambition, have at length awakened the sovereigns of Europe to a sense of their dangers, and gifted them with fortitude to resist, in good time, the desolation that menaces their dominions.

French authority or influence preserves an uniformity of features in every age and region. Wherever they have begun with offers of protection, they have passed with rapid transition to absolute command. In all their expeditions, whether towards the north or south, their manners have been remarkably incompatible with the manners of every other people. Barbarians are tenacious of their own customs, because they want

knowledge and taste to discover the reasonableness and propriety of customs which differ from them : the French are equally so out of pride. Full of themselves ; flattered by the imitation of their neighbours ; and accustomed to consider their own modes as the standards of excellence, they scorn to disguise, or to lay aside, the distinguishing manners of their own nation, or to make any allowance for what may differ from them among others. For this reason, the behaviour of their armies has, on every occasion, been insupportable to strangers, and has always exposed them to hatred, and often to destruction. They have repeatedly overrun Italy by their valour, and lost it as often by their insolence.

Every intelligence from the continent brings a melancholy confirmation of these characteristics. Scarcely a Dutch mail arrives without containing the groans of a suffering people, or preparing the public mind for some sudden explosion or political change. The same may be said of Genoa, the Italian and Swiss republics. Eternal revolution hangs on every lip ; industry, commerce, and the arts are fast going to decay ; anxiety is in every house, ruin at every door, consternation in every breast. In short, there is not an inhabitant of a speck of territory out of the confines of *old* France, who does not stand in need of war, in order to breathe with comfort, and to repose without apprehension on the pillow of domestic security.

France moves but by one routine of policy. She perplexes, intermeddles with, and disturbs the peace of neutral countries ; she depresses and insults every feeble state, that she may keep the more powerful in constant irritation ; she commands the blood and resources of the defenceless, that her own dominion may be raised beyond the reach of competition or control. Every act of French aggrandizement has been the fruit of successive usurpations over communities of infinitely less magnitude than their own. They have seduced, corrupted, betrayed, sold, and ransacked the continent with as much facility as a man could travel from one end of it to the other. By making every fresh acquisition furnish the means of fresh subversion, and by making a parade of a strength, which they do not possess in fact, they have hitherto succeeded in terrifying even the greater powers, already too much estranged from each other by their mutual jealousies, from forming a grand confederacy to repel their ambition. In the mean time, they advance step by step in their extravagant pretensions ; cut off and ruin independent countries in detail, until the greater part of that beautiful constellation of states, which once constituted the harmony, balance, and pride of European power, and which had cost ages of blood and struggles to establish, were utterly extinguished from the firmament of nations.

These awful events have occupied only three

years in their accomplishment ; during which the great powers have been passive spectators only of the completion of a policy, the very mention of which, an hundred years ago, would have aroused the civilized world to arms.

In the midst of these mortifying scenes of degeneracy on the one part, and of imperious insolence, mockery, and outrage on the other, these islands have been permitted by Providence, in mercy to mankind, not only to oppose this plea of universal empire, but to set an example of resistance to the rest of Europe. No sooner had the boastful menace been issued, that we were unable singly to contend with the power of France, than our people flew to arms, and belied the aspersion of the public detractor. Every artifice had been employed to circulate the opinion, that this country would be found in the same forlorn disquietude as the voluptuous and degenerated Romans in the days of Arcadius and Honorius ; that we should either purchase the procrastination of our fate by dishonourable submission ; or that, influenced by timid councils, we should recall our distant legions from every quarter of the globe to defend the seat of empire against a deluge of implacable barbarians. But these senseless bravadoes never discomposed the serenity and fortitude of the nation ; and though they were calculated to give mankind an unfavourable opinion of our country, yet they made no impression on those who had been accustomed to

reflect upon its immense resources, its compact population, inveterate Anti-gallican prejudices, its determined prowess, patriotism, and unanimity.

While we have successfully exposed these falsehoods, we held and still do hold the self-named conquerors of Europe in such a disgraceful imprisonment, that they cannot even skulk from their own harbours with impunity ; neither have they been able to spare a single battalion for the succour of their own colonies, much less for the invasion of the British : and thus have facts rectified the opinions of Europe, and Buonaparte is actually reduced to the very condition in which he falsely represented Great Britain to be placed. This circumstance, we apprehend, will infuse a new soul into the desponding continent.

After all, notwithstanding the greatness of dominion and influence possessed by France, she is compelled to diminish her strength by spreading it abroad. If she retained only her ancient limits, her military array would be alarming indeed ; but, from the necessity she is under of distributing her forces, she loses that intrinsic power which she would possess by their concentration at home. Every one recollects that she did not find 800,000 men too many to preserve her from invasion during the late war ; and, in the present, when she is destitute of the principle of unity, and drags in her train a crowd of enfeebled states, which she has stripped of the means of defending them-

selves, much more of co-operating usefully with her, it is absolutely necessary for her to defend *them* by weakening *herself*. This is a necessity to which she has been driven by her enormous policy: besides which, their apathy itself is equivocal; they are considered as frontier departments, ever ready to shake off the yoke; and, therefore, an adequate force must be within call, to crush their revolts. As she feels herself not entitled to their confidence, she is compelled to exercise her sway tyrannically. The bloody rod of despotism must be unceasingly upheld, and it can be upheld only by an armed force. What security can she possibly obtain for the fidelity of those allies, whose weak numbers swell the catalogue of her legions? We know but of one—that which binds the creature to the Creator by a community of crimes and responsibility. Nothing, however, which has yet reached this country, concerning the transactions of those states, warrants the opinion, that, as whole communities, they participate either in her feelings or her views.

These considerations justify the policy of another continental league, and invite us to inquire into the probable effects of such an event.

[To be continued.]

IRELAND.

LETTER III.

(Continued from Page 68.)

November 30th, 1804.

I CONCLUDED my last with some traits in the character of the native Irish, which, if candour would allow, I should willingly have suppressed. It shews them to be vindictive, sometimes to a degree of barbarous ferocity, and sometimes without a visible cause. Their dreadful excesses during the rebellion, revolting as they were to human nature, can be more easily accounted for, as there they could plead a colourable right of retaliation or prevention. That in the south particularly, they are the prey of those strong and undisguised passions which mark the semi-barbarous state, I will not deny. Yet I am convinced, that with them the social passions are at least equally strong with those of the malignant kind. Their gratitude and attachment are at least as strong as their resentment and desire of revenge. I had repeated opportunities of observing, while I lived among them, that doing one of them a favour was a mean of securing the affections of a whole tribe. I must apologize for a little egotism here, as it accounts for my knowledge of their disposition. While I lived among them, I had

some opportunities of doing them small favours with their landlords, &c. : in return for this, they used to come as to their priest, voluntarily and gratuitously to assist at my harvest-work, and other business of that sort. Before the rebellion broke out, when the gentlemen of the country fled to the neighbouring towns for protection, or had little garrisons in their own houses, I, with some others, got secret assurances that “ *we had nothing to fear!* ”—UNCOMMON instances of talent and genius often appear among the very lowest classes of them, both in the north and south. I speak not of their specimens of native poetry, for which they have been always celebrated : those are sometimes gay and sprightly, sometimes plaintive and elegiac, and seem to mark the same irregularity that distinguishes the natural temperament of the majority. But there are numbers who seem *born* the votaries of the abstract sciences. Mathematics, with their preparatory studies, seem to be a favourite pursuit, and are taught and learned by numbers who have scarcely a whole coat to their backs. Mathematical questions are published every year in great variety ; the answers to which are the work of village schoolmasters, sometimes of common mechanics. A species of classical learning has subsisted for a long period in the south-west of Ireland, banished thither, probably, in some of the national convulsions.—There, the peasants speak Latin, I am

told, with great fluency, and surprising correctness, for their situation. This attachment to literature, such as it is, became a snare, which led numbers to rebellion ; for the crafty demagogue applied to the schoolmaster, who was generally the oracle of the village, and he misled the crowd, very often by the examples of Greece and Rome. I myself have known not only such teachers, but more than one common day-labourer, who had an extensive, though not a very philosophical knowledge of ancient history : the latter instances indeed occur in the north, where knowledge of every kind, if not more common, is yet in a more improved state ; as commerce and industry, and a more equal intermixture among Protestants, have given the native Irish (for it is of them still I speak) a stimulus to intellectual progress, which operates but faintly in the south. With respect to religious knowledge, the prime source of every mental and moral improvement, it is wonderful what effect this circumstance of mental contact (if I may be allowed the expression) has had within these few years in this part of Ulster. In my memory the Romanist laity were not allowed the use of the Scriptures : some of the better sort had the use of a corrupt and defective translation, called the Douay Bible ; but the poor were not even permitted to have a catechism, tinctured with what they call heresy. I have known a priest tear one of these little books in

pieces, and trample it under his feet, when he found it with one of his flock. Now, they voluntarily apply for the common Bibles (sold by our Association for promoting Religion) in great numbers, as many of the country members of that body can testify. Not only now, but for these several years, this has been the case. When the present Bishop of Dromore was applied to for some of those Bibles, by Catholics, his Lordship observed, “ that probably their priests would not allow them to keep them :” the answer was, “ no priest should prevent *them* from reading the word of God.”

This effect seems wonderful, till the cause is known ; but as that cause may be extended in its operation over the whole kingdom, the effect, I am convinced, would follow, probably in a less illustrious degree. The Bishop of Dromore was one of the first patrons of Sunday Schools ; by the perseverance of eighteen years, he has had opportunity to witness their good effects in his neighbourhood, among all denominations. By a little prudent management, he had prevailed both on the Dissenters and Catholic priests to let the children of their respective flocks attend. Some opposition he overcame, merely by the donation of little premiums : the books he gave away among the children, produced a veneration and love for the Scriptures, in the parents ; this occasioned their application for more ; and, by that mean,

knowledge of Christianity is now in its progress, which we trust will have effects equally beneficial and extensive :—the inference is obvious. If the Catholics are making such advances to join us, we ought to receive them with open arms. Communicated knowledge and communicated privileges would unite them to us still more closely. Emoluments granted to their clergy, would probably attach them to Government; *more* probably, it would still further detach their flock from them.

These schools appear to be attended with a double good effect, remote and instantaneous, on the parents and the children. The latter, many of whom are now grown up, shew, by their exemplary behaviour, what their education has been. They are remarkably sober and orderly, regular in their attendance on divine worship, and in their conduct blameless. The Bishop's demesne is constantly open, and his gardens exposed to plunder; yet nothing of that kind happened to him, particularly during the disturbances, when many plantations in the country suffered severely. His fruit-trees, which are far from being difficult of access, are quite secure from theft. *One* of his pupils found a purse on the road, and, instead of secreting the money, had it proclaimed by the common crier, and restored it to the owner, when ascertained.

This is a plan, which can be put in practice

with very little difficulty and very little expense ; its good effects, if extended, are incalculable. Would the dignified clergy, convinced of its utility, adopt the scheme with vigour ; would they enter into a resolution for that purpose ; could they propagate that resolution to their successors, that they would ordain no man, that they would provide for no man, but *those* only who in their several parishes would put this or a similar scheme in execution ; I am convinced the laity would cheerfully co-operate ; and nothing that I can conceive would so much tend to obliterate religious distinctions, promote morality, and extend civilization. An instance of what can be effected by such a resolution, is seen by the *general* good effects which are produced by the determination of Bishops in this kingdom, to ordain none but such as have attended theological lectures in the College a certain number of terms. This mode of conduct would have the most certain tendency to invalidate the objections of the ancient schismatics, whose most formidable artillery has ever been directed against the negligence of established pastors ; it would no less obviate the machinations of modern zealots, who, under different names, either teach the possibility of attaining *unsinning perfection* *, after which, all the peccadillos of the saints, according to them,

* See Wesley on Perfection.

are only *errors* of judgment ; or, by the doctrine of a certain number elected, without conditions, at or before the lapse of Adam, open a wide avenue for presumption or despair, with that unbounded licentiousness which must be the result of either.

That such opinions are not confined to the lower orders, has appeared by that spirit of dangerous enthusiasm, which lately infected a large proportion of our academical students, by teachers of the latter class, who spread their opinions through our university. The effect has, in some measure, been obviated ; but a cause remains, which has still a more extensive bad influence even on the education of the lay-scholars : this is the want of a professor of moral philosophy in our college. To this, among other causes, may probably be imputed the dissipated morals and unsettled principles (not to mention the ignorance) of many who have had their education there. And as to literary pursuits, it is evident to all the world, that, while we have authors eminent in various sciences, in polite literature, and even in polemic divinity, we can boast none that deserves the title of a good moralist. It would not, I conceive, be difficult to remedy this defect in our public system of education, by a moderate fund granted for the purpose, or such other means as Parliament in its wisdom might judge expedient.

But, *opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum* ;

and a dreain will be a most congruous conclusion to these drowsy subjects: coming from the land of shadows, it will not be surprising that it has not much substance; but if it be empty, it shall be transient also.

While I was pondering on the means of promoting the industry, and of extending the manufactures of Ireland, I fell asleep, and was transported on the wings of fancy to a fertile plain, terminated on the west by a majestic winding river, and gradually swelling to the east into a range of cloud-capped mountains, which I immediately recognised to be the Gaulties in the fertile county of Tipperary. Hamlets and villages had risen where immense and lonely tracts of pasturage had spread before; and now, instead of the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen, the “busy haunts of men resounded” with the stridulous harmony of the wheel, the loom, and *spinning jenny*. While I stood musing on this wonderful change, and could not conceive by what means it could have been accomplished, I was suddenly wafted to the world of spirits, where the first that accosted me was the shade of Adam Smith, the celebrated moralist and politician. “I perceive your wonder,” said he, “at your country’s improvement, and I am commissioned to account for it, which I do with pleasure, as my observations contributed to the change. When I demonstrated, in my Treatise on the Wealth of Na-

tions, that rents, not fixed at a certain sum *yearly*, but regulated by the average price of corn, suppose in five years, gave an increase of income in an astonishing proportion above what is called money-rents, I did not foresee the advantage which would arise from it to the British dominions at large (particularly to Ireland), if that mode were generally adopted. In process of time the eyes of land proprietors were opened; *they* saw, that, by giving *perpetuities* on this plan, master manufacturers would be encouraged to take large tracts of ground, and lay out money in lasting improvements, which, as it would encourage agriculture and population, would keep the price of corn at a height, which demonstrates corn-rents to be the best mode of improving the income of landlords. I need not enlarge upon the result; you saw it with your eyes." I heard and saw no more; but the impression was so strong upon me that I awoke, and, recollecting the observations of the learned professor in his great work, I ventured to give you my waking dream on the subject, which seems to me worth more attention than I believe it has obtained, I mean to the original author, from whom I only draw an inference, which, if not applicable to Ireland, may be to some other part of the empire, as, even in cases where *perpetuities* cannot be given, the advantage of this species of rent is evident.

POSTSCRIPT.

It appears by the correspondence of the famous Bishop Berkeley (see his Works, vol. ii. 4to. edition) with some priests in the south of Ireland, that much of the poverty and wretchedness of their flocks arose from *their* indirect or undisguised opposition to every scheme of improvement proposed. This evidently arose from an apprehension that those priests would lose that influence which they derived from the general ignorance of their congregations. The continuation of this mental blindness *they* could not expect, should they attain that improvement of their condition, and enjoy the other benefits which would accrue from their connexions with their more civilized neighbours of the Protestant communion. This points out the good policy of giving another direction to the bias of their teachers, and putting an end, if possible, to the remains of national jealousy by judicious donations, and such privileges bestowed upon the whole body, as would not affect the constitution.

I do not mean to insinuate that all the Orangemen adopted the principles of the first aggressors, who got the name of *Peep-of-day Boys*; on the contrary, the objects and conduct of the former were highly commendable, and calculated to prevent the dissemination of wicked opinions and practices, which, but for the spirit of that asso-

ciation, would have spread to a still larger extent. But numbers of the russians above mentioned, found means to assume this truly respectable name, and were seen in crowds following the orange standard ; by that means they brought an odium on the cause, of which the opposite party availing themselves, produced the most destructive consequences.

POLITICAL LITERATURE.

BEFORE we commence this department of our work, we think it right to premise, that it is not our intention to enter the lists of reviewers, as competitors for literary fame. Our plan is necessarily restricted to narrower limits. Facts and falsehoods are the objects of our solicitude and exposure ; to illustrate the one, and to detect the other, are the duties which we profess our willingness to discharge. With us therefore political pamphlets will be examined with less severity as works of composition, than by the literary censor. It is of no consideration (politically speaking) what may be the cut of a man's coat, provided his principles are good ; and for the same reason, if sophistry be circulated under a splendid dress, it will be our business to tear off the tinselled habit, and expose it to the public view in all its hateful de-

formity. Hence, the *matter* contained in such productions, and not the *manner* in which they are exhibited, is the subject of our investigation ; and we shall endeavour to compress and to class our materials into such a form as may afford the reader, at one glance, an accurate analysis of the sentiments of our political writers. But few treatises of this description have been lately published. Sir Robert Wilson's "Inquiry into the present State of the Military Force of the British Empire, &c." has already undergone some animadversions in our former number. The contemptuous manner in which he mentions our brave and patriotic volunteers, extorted from us a relation of the exploits performed by similar bodies, under circumstances far more trying than any of those which are likely to befall the British empire. At the same time, we did not omit the opportunity of reprobating Sir Robert for the injudicious and ill-founded resemblance which he drew between the present condition of this country and Carthage. In addition to the observations which we then offered upon this mistatement, we take the liberty of subjoining a few remarks, by way of corollary, upon the political system of the latter.

The power, the conquests, the credit, and glory of the Carthaginians all flowed from trade. By becoming the factors and agents of all nations, they had made themselves lords of the sea ; the bond which held the East, the West, and South

together ; and the necessary channel of their communication : so that Carthage rose to be the common city, and the centre of the trade of all those nations which the sea separated from one another. Thus far there is a similarity between Carthage and Britain. But they differ as much in military policy as in geographical position. The military power of Carthage consisted in its alliances with kings ; in tributary nations, from which they drew both men and money ; in *some* troops raised from among their own citizens ; and in mercenary soldiers, purchased of neighbouring states. By venal blood they possessed themselves of provinces and kingdoms. But as these parts were fortuitously brought together, they did not adhere by any natural, intimate, or necessary tie. No common and reciprocal interest united them in such a manner as to form a solid and unalterable body. No one individual in those mercenary armies wished sincerely the prosperity of the state. They did not act with the same zeal, nor expose themselves to dangers with equal resolution, for a republic which they considered as foreign, and which consequently was indifferent to them, as they would have done for their native country, whose happiness constituted that of the several members who composed it. In great reverses of fortune, the kings in alliance with the Carthaginians (as Syphax and Masinissa) were easily detached from their interest. The mercenary forces, ac-

customed to measure their fidelity by the largeness or continuance of their pay, were ever ready on the least discontent, or the slightest expectation of a more considerable stipend, to desert to the enemy with whom they had just before fought, and to turn their arms against those who had invited them to their assistance. Thus the grandeur of the Carthaginians, being sustained only by these foreign supports, was shaken to the very foundation when they were once taken away ; and the rebellions which harassed Carthage in its latter years, ought to have taught its citizens, that no miseries are comparable to those of a government which is supported only by foreigners ; since neither zeal, security, nor obedience can be expected from them.

THE SPANISH WAR.

It was to be expected that the detention of the Spanish Plate ships would excite a warm and spirited discussion in this country, between such persons as were predetermined to censure every act of the present Administration, whether right or wrong, and those who were equally strenuous in their support of the Government, both from their confidence in the talents of Ministers, and their conviction of the impropriety of throwing any obstacles in the course of public proceedings during the present conjuncture of our affairs.

Yet is it not extraordinary, that only one solitary pamphlet of thirty-nine pages has protested against a measure of Government, which, if unjust, would have infallibly provoked the indignation of the country? This proves, either that the author was premature in the publication of opinions which men of better judgment would have reserved until the merits of the whole case had been submitted to them; or, that the voice of the people is decidedly in accord with the sentiments of His Majesty's Ministers. Indeed, according to the rules of retributive justice, we might have retorted long ago the subjugation of the Electorate of Hanover, by falling on Spain, the ally of France. But the character of the war in which we are engaged, demands that generosity should predominate in the breasts of those who possess the power of being severely just, without exemplifying weakness. Our abstemious policy denoted, perhaps, too much forbearance; but it was a stipulation in behalf of national honour, and the triumph of public humanity. But let us analyze minutely the poison that drops from this forlorn Upaz, which spreads consternation and dismay, in the shape of

“A brief Appeal to the Honour and Conscience of the Nation, upon the Necessity of an immediate Restitution of the Spanish Plate Ships; by the Author of the ‘Cursory Remarks.’”

The substance of this Appeal, which bears throughout evident marks of a hasty composition, cannot be better explained than in the words of the author :

“ A great crime has been committed—the laws of nations have suffered the most atrocious violation. A friendly power has been attacked by public force, during a time of profound peace, while the King’s person was represented at Madrid, and while our court was receiving assurances of amity from a Spanish minister in London.—The ships of Spain have been captured—her faithful subjects have perished miserably in her defence—her plundered treasure infects our shores—and our flag rides like a pirate, over the weak, the oppressed, and the unhappy.” P. 3.

Though this denunciation be brief, it must be confessed that it is very comprehensive. In the short compass of a few lines, the British Government has been presumed guilty of fraud, treachery, murder, piracy, and oppression. These are dreadful charges ; and, if they could be substantiated, instead of taking the lead among nations as a brave, honest, and generous people, we should deserve to be consigned to the dens of lions and the nurseries of tigers.

Fortunately however, while the author professes to appeal to the honour and conscience of the nation, he disclaims every idea of entering into the merits of the question. The whole force then of

his Appeal, or rather of his allegations against the Ministers, consists in this point, that “ national principles, national virtue, and national glory, have all been compromised and tarnished by the levying of war against the Spanish nation, *during the presence of a British representative at the court of Madrid.*” P. 31. And the remedy proposed is, “ that county, town, and borough meetings should be holden, in order to petition His Majesty that he would be pleased to give orders for the immediate restitution of the register-ships, whether in his royal wisdom he shall determine upon peace or war.” P. 29-30.

It has been observed that there cannot be much ingenuity in exposing a judge, who, without hearing evidence, pronounces the act of killing to be murder, when the evidence, if heard, would have proved it justifiable and in self-defence. The remark strictly applies to the work before us; for the author complains not against the war, nor argues against its justice, but confines his animadversions solely to the manner in which it was commenced. His argument therefore rests on a point of etiquette; and he endeavours, under the guise of a meretricious eloquence, to dissuade the public from making inquiry, by divesting the subject of all its real properties, and by anticipating its judgment before the case has been investigated. The sophistry of the writer has not availed him on this occasion; for, in thorough contempt of his recom-

mendation, the public have ruminated over the merits of our cause of quarrel, and have stamped with their approval the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers.

With respect to the point of etiquette, the observance of which he has pleaded with the punctilious pride of a Castilian grandee ; it is not without its precedents in modern times. In the course of the last century, not less than three wars commenced without any previous declaration of war ; and in the present instance, it now appears from the documents laid before both Houses of Parliament on Thursday last, that the conduct of our Government was perfectly regular, conformable to the law of nations, and exemplified throughout by the strongest proofs of integrity, moderation, and compassion towards Spain. If our readers will only refer to those documents, they will find every allegation of this writer completely refuted by facts ; for it was distinctly made known to the Spanish Government through the medium of M. D'Anguada here, and of our minister at the Court of Madrid, that its inattention to our just demands would be considered as tantamount to the commencement of hostilities. This declaration, frankly communicated, and often repeated, superseded the necessity of any other notification ; and the delay of Mr. Frere's departure from Madrid cannot be considered in any other light than as a test of the anxiety felt by our Government, that Spain would

avert, by equitable concessions, the calamities which threatened her, in the event of a war with Great Britain. So different indeed were the sensations of the Spanish minister from the British writer, upon the whole of this transaction, that he actually declares Mr. Frere personally responsible for closing all negotiation, and demanding his passports.

The whole of this pamphlet has been framed upon a set of false premises, which, to suit his own purposes, the writer has propagated, in order to give the semblance of truth to his conclusions. Thus, he infers from “the high and wounded feelings of Castilian honour,” that the *detention* of the Spanish frigates was a positive act of war: so far, however, is this inference from being correct, that it proves the contrary; for its object was to *promote* the ends of peace and justice. The fatal and lamentable consequences that followed the resistance of the Spaniards, make no part of the question; for although that resistance might have been, and probably was foreseen, yet it could not have operated against the execution of the measure itself, admitting the principle to be just. But what, on a superficial view, struck the *Cursory Remarker* as an act of piracy, turns out to have been a common measure of precaution, adopted by all civilized nations; for where is the distinction between the detention of these frigates, and an embargo previous to a declaration of war? No

one condemns the latter, because it is universally practised ; but in the present instance, the justice of the principle is overlooked in the awfulness of the catastrophe ; the effect is confounded with the cause, notwithstanding that the two cases are parallel in every respect.

Suppose, for example, that the order for laying an embargo on the ships of a foreign power should be resisted (which might happen with as much propriety as in the case of the Spanish frigates) ; it is obvious that bloodshed would be the inevitable effect of such a resistance. But would any man infer, from this fatal consequence, that the iniquity of those who issued the order was established by the fact, or that it aggravated the guilt of their misconduct ? Surely not. The effect of the resistance would be contingent ; but the legality of the order would not be disputed. This is the true and proper light, by which the subject under our discussion ought to be viewed. Orders were issued to our commanders to *detain*, not to make prizes of Spanish ships of war, or vessels laden with treasure, which, according to our construction, we had a right to consider as ships of war. The nature of *detention* implies restitution the moment the cause of action has been removed. Its operation is exactly the same as in the case of the arrest of a person for debt ; the moment the debt is paid, the person is liberated : and there is no doubt, this was the intention of

our Government, since it appears, from the conversation between Lord Harrowby and the Chevalier D'Anguada, that the treasure would be deposited in a place of safety, and that the Spanish officers and men would be treated with every degree of hospitality, until the points under discussion should be brought to an amicable conclusion. Had the Spanish Government acceded to our propositions, both the frigates and the treasure would have been restored ; and those who recollect the honourable conduct of the British Government in the case of the Swedish convoy, need not be reminded that our Country is as generous as she is just. On the other hand, the denial of equitable claims converts the original detention on our part, into a forfeiture on the part of Spain.

Far be it from us to deny the right of the Spaniards to resist the order of our Government ! Although humanity sickens at the melancholy tale of the loss they sustained in the Mercedes ; although we are persuaded, that the kindred sympathy of Spain herself dropt not a fuller tear on the unhappy fate of those who were buried in the profundity of the deep, than Britain, and especially that portion of her sons who were selected to execute her solemn decree ; yet is it no derogation from our national characteristic, no degeneracy of public principle, in paying the tribute of approbation to those gallant men, who nobly (and as they thought) justly defended the honour of their

name, even at the peril of their lives. We cannot express our feelings stronger upon this occasion, than by avowing, that, if we had been in their places, we should have acted precisely in the same manner as they have acted. But events, whether favourable or unfavourable, do not alter the justice of measures.

However, when the writer compares the unfortunate explosion of the Mercedes to the cutting and maiming the man whom we have robbed on the highway—when he accuses the Ministers of harbouring this opinion, by their dispatching so exact a parity of force, as to compel the Spanish admiral to fight for his honour, when a ship or two of the line would have induced him to strike at our summons ; he grossly perverts the reason and conduct of our Government. For, in reverting to the official papers, No. 17, it will be found that Lord Harrowby expressly stated to the Spanish minister, that “ although it was hoped the treasure might have been brought in *single ships, of a force so inferior to his Majesty's squadron, as to justify the expectation that they might be detained without violence,* yet that his Majesty's Government were aware that this expectation might be disappointed, and, as the act itself was thought necessary, had determined to incur the hazard of what might follow from resistance.” Indeed, the whole sophistry of this pamphlet seems to have been composed with a view to criminate our Govern-

ment for cutting off the advantages which the public enemy would have otherwise derived from its inactivity, and to provoke the indignation of the country at the narrative of an event which merits our commiseration, because it was an accident. With equal justice he might have accused the Ministers with having issued positive instructions for the explosion of the *Mercedes*, as now to impeach their conduct for the fatal catastrophe which was the result of them.

The writer next demands the *date* of the notice which Ministers gave to the Spanish ambassador, of their intention to detain the treasure-ships ; for, he observes, “ unless they gave it time enough for his Excellency to alter the course of the plate-ships, or to procure them a convoy from Old Spain, it will take away nothing of their injustice ; and if they did, it will add precisely so much to their absurdity ; as they were counteracting their own measure, and doing whatever lay in their power to prevent our squadron from executing their own orders.”

Thus, if we admit this curious argument in its full latitude, it is evident, that, in the opinion of the writer, it was utterly impossible for Ministers to avoid acting wrong. He has placed them in a dilemma, from which human ingenuity cannot extricate them ; for if they had not given notice of their intentions, they would have been culpable ; and if they had, they would have been equally so.

The point is here very unfairly stated ; and the fact has been evidently tortured into a misrepresentation. For the *date* of the notice is as old as the commencement of the negotiations in 1803 ; and had he waited the production of the official documents, he would have discovered that a *general* notice had been given, both to the court of Madrid and its minister resident in London, of our future intentions ; but that the *particular* exposure of them was reserved in sound policy for the determination of our own Government, according as the exigency of circumstances, the continued equivocations and refusal of explanations to our lawful remonstrances, might require.

That this is the exact state of the case, we are now in possession of sufficient evidence to prove. For, in the number of the official papers already cited, we find that “ the court of Madrid could have no reason to be surprised that such a step was taken, as it had been *repeatedly* stated to the Spanish Government, and particularly in a note delivered by Mr. Frere, on the 18th of February last (full time for the dispatch of an unarmed vessel to delay the sailing of the plate-fleet, or to provide it with convoy), “ that as long as they continued in a situation of merely nominal neutrality, any naval armament in their ports must be considered as putting an *immediate end to the forbearance of England, and as necessarily producing consequences that were distinctly pointed out.*”

Next, with regard to the *specific* notice of an intention to detain the plate-ships; Lord Harrowby observes, that “ to have announced more particularly the intention of detaining the treasure-ships, must either have been perfectly useless, if the Spanish Government had no means of giving them notice of such intention, or must have afforded the opportunity of rendering it completely abortive.”

To the philanthropical rhapsodies, which figure in every page of this hostile pamphlet, we cannot oppose a better voucher than the Spanish Manifesto, replete with gross and palpable contradictions, or the address of the Prince of Peace to the armies, full of fury and falsehoods. In the whole of these transactions Castilian faith did not keep pace with the old Castilian honour; nor have greater proofs of duplicity and fraud been ever exhibited in the pages of any diplomatic proceedings.

For any accidents which may tend to aggravate the calamities of war, none can be more disposed than we are, to feel and to express our regret. But we shall ever feel it our duty to distinguish between those misfortunes which are voluntarily incurred by the crime of a perfidious friend, and those even, which are involuntarily occasioned to an enemy by the rudeness of war. Occasions may happen, wherein it would be more praiseworthy to deplore the sufferings of an avowed enemy, than to

commiserate the punishment of a treacherous friend.

If the dreadful sacrifice of lives, caused by the explosion of the *Mercedes*, excite our pity, surely some indulgence ought to be made for the feelings of the British people, who were exposed, by this meditated fraud of Spain, to see the ambitious enterprises of the common enemy strengthened, perhaps realized, by such an enormous accession of treasure ; their country delivered over to the flames, and its inhabitants bleeding under the wounds inflicted by merciless barbarians.

The precautions measures adopted by our Government ; the firmness, combined with lenity, which it observed throughout the discussion ; and, lastly, the vigorous and spirited manner in which it maintained the honour and justice of the country ; have averted, under Providence, the dangers which threatened our independence, from the chicanery and collusive policy of Spain, as well as from her scandalous connivance at the machinations of France.

Independently of the immediate dependance of the court of Madrid on the cabinet of St. Cloud ; of the constant and almost unbroken alliance between the two countries ever since the year 1761 ; the offensive and defensive alliance concluded at St. Ildefonso in 1796, placed the Spanish dominions and power in Europe completely at the dis-

posal of the French Government. That treaty, it now appears, received not only an additional confirmation by the subsidiary treaty (mislabeled by the Spanish Government a treaty of neutrality), but acquired additional stipulations in favour of France, at the expense of England. No other construction can be given to the substance of a convention, which the party claiming the privileges of a neutral power refuses to communicate to the other belligerent state. This refusal was of itself a sufficient ground for the commencement of hostilities; and the reason assigned for not disclosing its stipulations, that it would be offensive to the Court of St. Cloud, justified the measures which have been adopted, and authorized us, without a moment's loss of time, to push those hostilities with the utmost energy and vigour.



THE STATE OF PARTIES.

It was our intention to have entered into very considerable details upon this subject; but as His Majesty's Speech seems to have given general satisfaction, we shall postpone our observations to a future day; wishing, at the same time, that we may never be furnished with any cause for submitting them to the public.

His Majesty's Speech, which may be considered as the outline of the conduct of Administration, will require from us a more detailed illustration than our limits will allow of at present. But we cannot forego the pleasure of congratulating the public on the favourable picture it has drawn of our internal condition, and the cautious jealousy with which the late communication from the French Government has been received. We rejoice to find, that Europe is emerging from its state of apathy; and that no negotiation with France will be opened but in concert with those powers which are more immediately implicated in the preservation of the independence of Europe. For the same reasons that we should deprecate the effort of any *single* power of the continent against France, we are willing to hope that no peace will be made with that state, except in conjunction with Russia and Sweden. Mutual interests beget mutual exertions; and if Buonaparte will not relinquish his projects of aggrandizement, His Majesty's Declaration will serve as a pledge to all Europe of our justice, fidelity, and resolution. This pledge has been given with so much solemnity, and in terms so explicit, that the continental sovereigns cannot now misapprehend its tenour, or doubt our sincerity.

Notice has been given in Parliament of a motion respecting the Roman Catholics of Ireland. We have not been made acquainted with the objects

which it embraces; but we cannot conceal our apprehensions, that the subject is revived more to try the strength of parties, than to benefit those whom it professes to serve. We are decidedly hostile to the discussion at this peculiar crisis of affairs, since it may create divisions at a time when we should be all united. But, as soon as we shall have obtained sufficient information respecting the proposed inquiry, we shall not hesitate to offer our opinions upon it, with freedom and impartiality.

* * * We have been constrained, from the length of several of our Articles, to defer the insertion of the paper on the Middlesex Election until our next Number: but Sir Francis Burdett and Co. will gain nothing by the delay. In the mean time, it may not be amiss to acquaint our readers, that *several thousand* copies, containing Extracts from Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, in support of the *good old Cause*, have been printed and circulated by order of Sir Francis's Committees.—Our next Number will be published on Saturday the 9th of February.

January 26, 1805.



